



**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PODCAST
PRESENTS:**



**THE COMPLETE COURSE
QUESTIONS 1 - 100**

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Introduction to the United States The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

A: Principles of American Democracy

1. What is the **supreme** law of the land?

Answer:

The Constitution

Explanation:

Back in 1787, more than 200 years ago, the United States of America didn't exist the way it does today. There were just 13 states, and after they gained independence from **Great Britain**, they had a very weak government. They **struggled** to survive (or continue to exist) for several years with this weak government, but they had many problems. So the 13 states decided to work together and write a new **document** (or written record) to make the country stronger and more **unified** (or as one group), so they could work better together as one nation. They called this new document the **Constitution**.

The word "Constitution" comes from the verb to constitute, meaning to put things together. The Constitution joined (or put together) the 13 states into a new country. Since that time, the Constitution has been the **supreme** (or highest) law in the United States. Everyone who lives in the United States must **obey** (or follow) the Constitution. If there is a disagreement over whether something is legal (agrees with the law) or illegal (against the law), we use the Constitution to help us **to resolve** (or decide) the issue. That's why it is the highest and most important legal document in the country.

The Constitution was written during the summer of 1787 at a meeting called the Constitutional Convention in the city of **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**. It was a long, hot summer that year when the 55 **delegates** (or **representatives**) met to write this new set of laws. Everyone had a different opinion (or thought or belief) about how the new government should be organized. This is not surprising, since the delegates had many different experiences and backgrounds. They were lawyers, teachers, doctors, and **military men**, and more. The delegates also had some things in common: they were all white men (no women or non-whites were allowed to participate in the Constitutional Convention), and they were all **wealthy** (or had a lot of money) and **owned land**. The president (or leader) of the Convention was the famous military general, **George Washington**, who later became the first president of the United States.

The delegates discussed and argued for many weeks, but they finally agreed on a set of laws that would **form** (or create) their new government. The document they produced (or made) is what we call the Constitution.



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Glossary

1. What is the supreme law of the land?

document – a written record; a report, policy, law, essay, or anything else that is written down to share information

* We had to sign a lot of documents when we bought our home.

unified – as one group; together

* Environmental groups would be stronger if they were unified, but in reality, they fight with each other too much.

Constitution – the most important legal document in the United States, describing the national government and how it should work

* The first three words of the U.S. Constitution are "We the People."

supreme – highest; most powerful; most important; best; the biggest possible

* The supreme challenge for the future is finding a good source of energy other than oil.

to obey – to follow; to listen to; to do what one is told to do

* When you were a teenager, did you obey your parents?

to resolve – to find a solution to a problem; to decide something; to bring an end to a problem or situation

* After fighting for two weeks, they resolved their disagreement and became friends again.

delegate – representative; a person who is sent to a meeting or other event by and for another person

* I couldn't go to the meeting of nations last week, but I sent my assistant as a delegate.

wealthy – rich; with a lot of money

* She believes that wealthy people should give some of their money to poor people.

to form – to create; to make; to establish

* That organization was formed by a group of scientists in 1932.



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2. What does the Constitution do?

Answer:

- It sets up the government
- It defines the government
- It protects the basic rights of Americans

Explanation:

The United States would be a very different country if it did not have the U.S. Constitution, because it does three very important things. First, it sets up (or organizes) the government, just like you would organize any organization or business. The U.S. Constitution divides the government into three **branches** (or parts): the **legislative** branch, the **executive** branch, and the **judicial** branch. The legislative branch creates (or makes) the new laws. The executive branch enforces (or makes sure people follow) the laws. The judicial branch is the court system, which **interprets** (or decides what something means in) the laws and determines (or decides) who is guilty of breaking (or going against) the laws.

All three branches are important. The Constitution makes the branches share power equally, which means that no one branch is stronger than the others. One branch cannot take all the power for itself. We call this sharing “checks and balances.” **To check** here means to control, and **to balance** means to make things equal. These checks and balances help control the three branches and keep them equal to each other. If one branch tries to take too much power, one of the other branches can put a stop to it.

The second important thing that the Constitution does is to **guarantee** (or promise and protect) the rights of all Americans. The representatives at the Constitutional Convention didn’t want the government interfering too much in the lives of the people. So they wrote a list of rights – a list of things that everyone could do – and made them part of the Constitution. These are rights that the **federal** government guarantees. The federal government is the national government, which makes laws for all of the states. There are also state governments that make laws for each individual state.

The third thing the Constitution does is to **define** (or explain) what powers the states have and what powers the federal government has. The states have to make laws that agree with the U.S. Constitution, since the Constitution is the supreme (or highest) law in the country.



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2. What does the Constitution do?

branch – a part of something, usually of the government or an organization; one of many parts

* Which branch of the military are you in: the Army, Navy, or Air Force?

legislative – related to making laws; related to the part of the government that makes laws

* The U.S. president doesn't have any legislative power and cannot make laws.

executive – related to enforcing laws or making sure that people follow laws; related to the U.S. president

* One of the president's executive powers is to declare war against other countries.

judicial – related to interpreting the laws (deciding what laws mean) and deciding who has broken a law

* When did the court make its judicial decision?

to interpret – to determine or decide what something means

* When I saw the "no smoking" sign, I interpreted it as meaning that I couldn't smoke indoors, but that it would be okay to smoke outdoors.

to check – to control; to monitor or observe something to make sure that it is done correctly

* The vice-president of finance checks the company's spending.

to balance – to make or keep things equal, so that no part is stronger, bigger, or more powerful than another part

* It is difficult for him to balance his time between his work and his family.

to guarantee – to promise and protect something; to make sure that something happens

* Freedom of religion guarantees that Americans can be part of any religion they want to.

federal – national; related to the entire country

* Federal highways are built by the national government; state highways are built by the states.

to define – to explain; to say what something is or what something means

* In this business, a "good year" is defined as a year with more than \$1 million in sales.



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**3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution.
What are these words?**

Answer:

We the People

Explanation:

The idea behind the words “We the people” is one of the most important ones in a democracy. A democracy is a government where the **citizens** (the people who are part of a country) vote for and **elect** (or choose) the people who will **govern** (or lead and make decisions for) them. The United States has a **representative democracy**, which means that citizens vote for people who then represent them in the government, making laws and decisions that reflect (or are the same as) what the citizens want.

These first three words of the Constitution, “We the people,” also tell us about the main difference between the United States and the European countries that most of the United States’ first citizens came from. Back in the 1700s, countries like England and France, where many of the first Americans came from, were ruled by a **monarch** (or a king). These monarchs usually **inherited** their power (or received it because one of their relatives had been a ruler or a king and then died) and often made decisions that their citizens did not like. One of the reasons that the American **colonists** (or the people who moved to the new country) fought the Revolutionary War to get their independence from Great Britain was because the colonists felt that the English king, George III, was treating them badly. Americans said that they were fighting the Revolutionary War for the right to **self-government**, or to have the ability to create their own government and elect their own officials or leaders.

The authors (or writers) of the Constitution were not writing it for just themselves. The writers of the Constitution wrote it **on behalf of** (or in the name of) all Americans. This is because they believed that for a government to be fair, it would have to be made by the people (that is, elected by citizens) and for the people, meaning doing things for the good of all citizens, not just a few.



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3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution.

citizen – a person who is part of a country; a person who belongs to a country

* If you want to work in the U.S. government, you must be a U.S. citizen.

to elect – to select or choose a person to work in a government job

* The mayor was elected with 62% of the votes.

to govern – to lead and make decisions for a group of people

* Russia used to be governed by a tsar and now it is governed by a president.

representative democracy – a type of government in which citizens vote for people who represent them in the government, usually making laws and decisions that the citizens want

* In a representative democracy, citizens can call their representatives to tell them how they would like them to vote.

monarch – a king or queen

* How long was King Henry I the monarch of England?

to inherit – to receive something when a relative dies

* Isabelle inherited \$35,000 when her grandfather died.

colonist – a person who lives in an area of land that belongs to a country that is far away

* The first colonists who came to North America from Europe had to work very hard to build farms, towns, and cities.

self-government – the ability of a group of people to create their own government and decide who will represent them in that government

* Native Americans had to fight for self-government for many years.

on behalf of (someone) – in the name of someone; doing something for someone else or because someone else has asked one to

* I'd like to accept this award on behalf of Dr. Holmes who couldn't come to the ceremony tonight.



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4. What is an amendment?

Answer:

- A change (to the Constitution)
- An addition (to the Constitution)

Explanation:

The men who wrote the U.S. Constitution knew that their document was not perfect. That is why they included ways to change or add laws to the Constitution in the future. The fifth **article** (or section) of the Constitution says that Americans can change the Constitution in two ways. The first way is to have another Constitutional Convention, a big meeting where representatives from all of the states would gather and decide on the changes, just like they did when the Constitution was written in Philadelphia in 1787. This way, however, has never been used. There has never been a second Constitutional Convention.

The second and more common way to change the Constitution has two steps. First, **Congress** (the group of elected national representatives) passes (or approves) a special law to change or add something to the Constitution. This change or addition is called an **amendment**. Two-thirds (or 67%) of the members of Congress has to **vote in favor of** (or say “yes” to approve) this amendment. Then the amendment must be approved by three-fourths (or 75%) of the states. Getting two-thirds of Congress and three-quarters of the states to agree is not an easy thing to do, and that is why there are not very many amendments to the Constitution. The President cannot create amendments and does not have the **right** (or power or ability) to **veto**, or say no to, amendments. After three-fourths of the states approve the amendment that has already been approved by Congress, the amendment officially becomes part of the Constitution.

Many of the rights that Americans believe are extremely important in the United States are actually not in the original Constitution of 1787. Instead they are in amendments to the Constitution. **Freedom** of religion, the right to vote regardless of someone’s skin color or sex (being a man or woman), and who can be a citizen are all **described** in different amendments to the Constitution.

Amendments can be **repealed** (or taken back) by passing other amendments. Only one amendment has been repealed in the history of the United States. The Eighteenth Amendment made it **illegal** (or against the law) to make or sell **alcohol**, such as beer and wine. This amendment was called the **Prohibition** amendment, because to prohibit means not to allow something, or to make something illegal. The Eighteenth Amendment was **approved** in 1919. However, the Twenty-First Amendment, passed in 1933, repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, so today Americans can make and sell alcohol again.



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4. What is an amendment?

article – a section or part, especially of a legal document

* This law has 39 articles.

Congress – the legislative (lawmaking) part of the U.S. government; the group of elected national representatives

* Have you ever visited the building where Congress meets in Washington, DC?

amendment – a change or addition, especially to the U.S. Constitution

* The 19th Amendment made it legal for women vote in the United States.

to vote in favor of (something) – to vote for something; to vote "yes" on something; to vote to approve something

* Why did you vote in favor of increasing taxes?

right – the power or ability to do something; a freedom

* Americans have many rights to believe and say whatever they want, as long as it cannot hurt other people.

to veto – to vote against something; to reject something, especially so that it cannot become a law

* How many times has the president vetoed a new law?

to repeal – to take back; to undo something, especially a law that was already made

* The city made a law that all teenagers must be home by 9:00, but it was very unpopular and was quickly repealed.

illegal – against the law; not legal

* In the United states, it is illegal to drink alcohol if you are less than 21 years old.

Prohibition – the period of time when there were laws against making, buying, and selling alcohol in the United States

* Many Americans bought alcohol illegally during the Prohibition.



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5. What do we call the first 10 amendments to the Constitution?

Answer:

The Bill of Rights

Explanation:

While the Constitution was being written, many people argued that it did not actually protect the **rights** (or freedoms) of citizens or protect citizens from having the government take away their rights. Because of this, immediately after the Constitution was ratified (or approved) in 1789, the First Congress proposed 12 amendments to the Constitution that would protect **civil rights** (or the rights that citizens have to social and political freedom and equality, and having the same opportunities as all other citizens). Ten of these Amendments were approved, and they became known as the Bill of Rights. “**Bill**” is an old word meaning a list, so the Bill of Rights is a list of a citizen’s basic rights.

The Bill of Rights includes a lot of rights and freedoms that are part of what it means to be an American. For example, it protects our freedom of speech—the right of people to say what they want. It also guarantees (or gives people the right to) freedom of religion, meaning that people can decide which religion they want to follow, or if they want to follow any at all. The Bill of Rights says that Americans have a right to **trial by jury**, meaning that when they go to court, a small group of citizens decides whether a person has done something against the law, instead of having just one person, the judge (or the head of the court), decide. The Bill of Rights also says that the police cannot go into an American’s home to look for something without a **search warrant**, which is specific permission for the police to search for something in a specific place, such as your home.

The Bill of Rights also protects people from **cruel and unusual punishment**. Something that is cruel is painful or unfair. “Unusual” means not common or not normal. So the meaning here is that the punishment for a crime should not be too painful or strange, and that it should be a normal punishment for that kind of crime.

The Second Amendment is **controversial** and is argued about because people in the U.S. have many strong opinions about it. It protects people’s right to keep and **bear arms** (or carry weapons, such as guns), so that they can protect themselves. Recently in the U.S., having a gun without getting permission first has increased a lot. Many people have argued for stronger **gun control** laws so that it would be more difficult for people to own guns. But other people say that gun control laws **violate** (or do something that is not allowed by) the Second Amendment.



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Glossary:

5. What do we call the first 10 amendments to the Constitution?

right – the power or ability to do something; a freedom

* The mayor said, "All children should have the right to a good education."

civil rights – the rights that citizens have to social and political freedom and equality, and having the same opportunities as all other citizens

* Around the world, many people have died while fighting for their civil rights.

bill – an old word meaning "list"

* The Bill of Rights is a list of 10 rights that all Americans should have.

trial by jury – a lawsuit in a court where a small group of people decides whether or not a person has done something against the law

* Without a trial by jury, just one person (the judge) would decide whether or not a person had broken a law.

search warrant – an official document that lets police enter one's home to look for something, even if one doesn't want them to enter one's home

* The police got a search warrant to look for drugs in that apartment.

cruel and unusual punishment – an uncommon, painful, unfair, and mean way to punish someone for doing something wrong

* In the United States, cutting off someone's fingers would be considered cruel and unusual punishment.

controversial – something that is argued about a lot because people have very strong and different opinions about it

* In the 1960s, the idea of having black and white students go to the same school was very controversial.

to bear arms – to carry weapons, especially guns

* People who don't like gun laws say that if people weren't allowed to bear arms, only the police would have guns.

gun control – the practice of using laws to make it difficult or impossible for people to own guns

* They think that fewer people would be killed each year if there was better gun control in the city.

to violate – to do something that is not allowed; to break a rule or law

* Griela violated the company's rules when she started smoking in her office.



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6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?*

Answer:

- Speech
- Religion
- Assembly
- Press
- Petition the government

Explanation:

Americans have a lot of freedom to say what they want, to believe what they want, and to get the government to do what they want. These and other rights (or freedoms) are found in the First Amendment to the Constitution. The First Amendment guarantees (or protects) **freedom of speech**, freedom of religion, **freedom of assembly**, **freedom of the press**, and the right to **petition** the government. Let's talk about each one of these.

Freedom of speech means that American citizens are allowed to say whatever they want to about ideas or people. They can say, for example, that they hate the President, or that they think that some laws are unfair. There are, however, some **limitations**, or things that are not allowed, and that the law does not protect. For example, people can't talk about **assassinating** (or killing) the President of the United States.

Freedom of religion is one of the most important freedoms in the First Amendment. The first Europeans came to North America because they were being **persecuted** (or attacked as a group) in England because of their religious beliefs. The First Amendment says that Americans can follow any religion, or no religion at all. It protects Americans in their **religious practices** (or actions related to religion).

Freedom of assembly gives Americans the right to join (or become a member of) any group, political party, club, or organization. You do not need the government's **permission** (or approval) to join an organization or to meet as a group.

Freedom of the press is another very important freedom in the United States. "The press" means news organizations, such as newspapers, television stations, radio stations, and websites. These news sources are allowed to say or write whatever they want to, whether it is in support of or against the government or any specific person.

Finally, the right to petition the government means that if the government does something that hurts you, you can complain and try to force the government to fix the problem or give you something in return for the **grievance** (or the thing that was wrong).



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Glossary

6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?*

freedom of speech – the right to say whatever one wants to; ability to speak about one's opinions or beliefs without getting into trouble with the government

* Thanks to freedom of speech, Americans are allowed to say that they don't like what the president does.

freedom of assembly – the right to join and participate in any group or organization and for that group to meet without being in trouble with the government

* Without freedom of assembly, Americans would have to ask the government for permission every time they wanted to meet in groups.

freedom of the press – the right of newspapers, magazines, radio programs, and television stations to write or say whatever they want to without asking the government for permission

* The U.S. government cannot tell newspapers what to write because that would go against Americans' freedom of the press.

to petition – to ask for something; to formally ask the government (or another person or group with power) for something that one wants

* We're going to petition the Board of Directors to increase the amount that we're paid each hour.

limitation – something that is not allowed or included in a law; the maximum amount of something that is allowed

* This airline's baggage limitation is two bags per person.

to assassinate – to kill a politician or another important person

* How many U.S. presidents have been assassinated?

to persecute – to attack or be mean to a group of people, usually because they are different than other people or because of their beliefs

* During World War II, many Jewish people were persecuted for their religious beliefs.

religious practices – actions related to a religion; the ways that people behave because of their religion

* Because of their religious practices, people who follow this religion do not work on Saturdays.



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permission – approval; being allowed to do something

* Students in class have to ask their teacher's permission to go to the bathroom.

grievance – a complaint about something that is wrong; a belief that something is wrong or unfair

* The workers' grievances against the company include not having enough vacation time and not being paid enough.



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7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?

Answer:

Twenty-seven (27)

Explanation:

When the **Founding Fathers** (or the men who made the U.S. government) wrote the Constitution in 1787, they wanted a government that would grow and change as America grew and changed. Everything they had written seemed like a good idea, but they knew that people might need or want to change parts of the Constitution later. The Founding Fathers wanted their new government to last a long time, and allowing Constitutional Amendments was their way to make sure that the government could change to meet the changing country's needs. The word amendment comes from the verb **to amend**, which means to change something, so an amendment is a change to the Constitution. Because the Constitution is always changing and being **reinterpreted** (or read again and understood differently), many people call it a "living document."

Amendments are added to the Constitution for many reasons: **to overrule** (or cancel or undo) a decision made by the Supreme Court (the highest court of the United States), to change something that was written in the Constitution, or to change something in society. For example, the Nineteenth Amendment changed something very important for half of the country—it gave women the right to vote in 1920. Before then, women were not allowed to vote. This Amendment forced society to change the way it thought about women and it eventually led to other changes and more equal rights for women in the United States.

A **proposed** amendment (or one that has been suggested but not yet approved) must be approved by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Once it is approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives, the amendment must be approved by three-fourths (or 75%) of the states before it can be added to the Constitution. The Constitution says that another way to make amendments is to have another Constitutional Convention (or meeting of the states' representatives), but this has never been done. The U.S. presidents do not participate in the **passage** (or approval) of an amendment, but they can tell the public what they think about it.

Currently, there are 27 amendments to the Constitution. The first 10 are **collectively** (or as a group) known as the **Bill of Rights**. The amendments included in the Bill of Rights were added long ago, in 1791. The most recent amendment (Amendment 27) was ratified (or approved) in 1992.



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7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?

Founding Fathers – the group of men who made the U.S. government

* George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are two very famous Founding Fathers.

to amend – to change something, especially the U.S. Constitution, usually by adding something to it

* When was the Constitution amended to let 18-year-olds vote?

to reinterpret – to read something again and decide that it should be understood differently

* The first time I read the book, I thought it was arguing that more money should be spent on education, but the second time I read it, I reinterpreted it to mean that we should be spending money on education more wisely.

to overrule – to cancel or undo a decision made earlier by someone else

* The company's president overruled the vice-president's decision, saying that it would make the company lose money.

proposed – suggested but not yet approved

* The program has a proposed budget of \$465,000, but it probably won't be approved.

passage – approval; the moment when the people making the decision agree to make a new law or rule

* The passage of the Clean Air Act was very important for environmentalists in the United States.

collectively – as a group; together; not independently

* Collectively, the doctors in this clinic have more than 100 years of experience.

Bill of Rights – the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, which state the rights that all Americans should have

* Some people believe that the Bill of Rights is the most important part of the U.S. Constitution



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8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?

Answer:

- Announced our independence from Great Britain
- Declared our independence from Great Britain
- Said that the United States is free (from Great Britain)

Explanation:

On July 4, 1776, a group of men **convened** (or met) in **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** and signed a document called the Declaration of Independence. **To declare** means to announce or let other people know about something, so a declaration is an announcement of some important **event** or action. The Declaration of Independence declared that the United States was **independent** (or free) from the control of the government of Great Britain. Once the Declaration of Independence was signed, the colonists became **revolutionaries** (or people who want to change the government). Their goal was to end British rule (or power and leadership) in America.

Why did the American colonists want to become independent from Great Britain and create their own country? The British had spent a lot of money fighting the French and Indian War in America from 1754 to 1763. When the War was over, the British government was poor. To make money, Great Britain began **taxing** its people, so that citizens had to pay more money to the government. The people the government taxed the most were those living in **overseas** (or **foreign**) colonies, including America.

Great Britain passed **a series of acts** (or laws) to put taxes on common things such as sugar, **stamps**, and tea. The acts made the colonists very angry, because they didn't want to pay so much for the things they needed. So they **boycotted** (or did not buy) many of these things. However, some colonists did not feel this was enough and wanted to do more, much more. What they wanted was to **get rid of** (or to not have any longer) the British government's power over their land.

After years of these unfair taxes, the American colonists decided to do something about it. **Thomas Jefferson** wrote the Declaration of Independence, and divided it into three **sections**. The first part included the reasons that America had the right to be independent. The second part had a list of things that the British King had done to hurt America. The third part was the **actual** declaration of independence.

The Declaration of Independence was signed by many famous people, including Thomas Jefferson and **John Adams**, who both later became U.S. presidents. **Benjamin Franklin**, the important **thinker** and writer, also signed the Declaration of Independence.



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8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?

to convene – to have everyone meet in a group; to create a meeting and to invite the members or other people to come

* Let's convene in Dylan's office at 3:15.

to declare – to officially state that something is true; to tell other people that something is true or has been decided

* Which president declared June 14 to be Flag Day?

independent – free; with liberty; not controlled by something or someone else

* When did this country become independent from Yugoslavia?

revolutionary – a person who wants to change the government

* Don't you know who he was? He was a famous revolutionary in Cuba.

to tax – to make citizens pay money to the government so that it can pay for services and other things for the country

* The United States taxes its citizens to have enough money to pay for the army, education, roads, and many other things.

overseas – foreign; related to other countries, especially on the other side of an ocean

* Have you ever flown overseas?

act – a written law

* The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 protected many old buildings in the United States

to boycott – to stop using, doing, or buying something as a way to show that one doesn't like the way something is done

* In the 1960s, many people boycotted grapes because they didn't like the way that the people who collected grapes were being treated by the people who owned the grape farms.

to get rid of (something) – to no longer have something; to throw something away; to stop having something

* When are you going to get rid of these old clothes that are too small for you?



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9. What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?

Answer:

- Life
- Liberty
- Pursuit of happiness

Explanation:

The phrase “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” comes from the Declaration of Independence and it is something Americans talk a lot about. These words were written by Thomas Jefferson. He and the other men who wrote the Constitution believed that these are **unalienable rights**, that people are born with and that a government should not be given the power to take them away. These words have become **synonymous with** (or have the same meaning as) the “American spirit” (or the way that Americans think and feel).

In the United States, the right to life is considered the most basic of all rights. It’s exactly what it sounds like: the right to be alive. It may seem funny that the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence included life as a right, but many of the earliest Americans had come from countries that did not take this right seriously. In many of these countries, governments **executed** (or killed) their own citizens. This is why the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence included the right to life.

The second of Jefferson’s rights is the right to **liberty** (or freedom). The right to liberty is a person’s right to make his or her own decisions. Again, many of the countries from which the earliest Americans came did not give their people this right.

The rights to life and liberty are easy to understand, but the third right, the right to the pursuit of happiness, is more **vague** (or unclear and difficult to understand). To **pursue** is to work hard to get something, in this case, happiness. Happiness, of course, could mean anything a person wants to have: a job, a family, or a safe place to live. The writers of the Declaration of Independence believed that the government should not **interfere with** (or get in the way of) a person’s right to pursue happiness. The pursuit of happiness is **exemplified by** (or shown or seen in) many American **rags-to-riches stories**, where a person who is very poor becomes very rich because of their own hard work, including those of several U.S. Presidents.



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Glossary

9. What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?

unalienable rights – rights (powers and abilities) that all people should have and that should never be taken away by anyone or any government

* Many Americans think that the freedom of religion is an unalienable right that the government should never be able to take away.

synonymous with (something) – with the same meaning as something else

* For her, spending the day on the beach with her family is synonymous with complete happiness.

to execute (someone) – to kill someone, usually because he or she has done something against the law or against a government

* Do you think that murderers should be executed or put in jail for the rest of their life?

liberty – freedom

* The United States fought for liberty from Great Britain during the Revolutionary War.

vague – unclear; hazy; difficult to understand; not specific or detailed

* Marcela said that she didn't come to the meeting because she had "something to do," but that seems like a vague excuse to me.

to pursue – to work hard to get something, especially if it is difficult or requires a lot of time

* I want to pursue a career in medical research.

to interfere with (something) – to get in the way of something; to prevent something else from happening; to make it difficult for something else to happen

* Many teenagers complain that their parents are always interfering with their plans to have fun.

to be exemplified by (something) – to be shown, seen, or explained as something else; to give as a typical example of something

* The Impressionist style is exemplified by this painting.

rags-to-riches story – a story where a very poor person works very hard and, as a result, becomes very rich and successful

* My father's life is a rags-to-riches story, since he started with nothing and today he is the president of a big bank.



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10. What is freedom of religion?

Answer:

You can practice any religion, or not practice a religion.

Explanation:

Many of the earliest Americans followed a religion that was different from the one **practiced** (or believed in) by the people in government. These early Americans **fled** (or ran away from) their **original** countries because they were treated unfairly because of their **religious beliefs**. When it was time for them to write their own **governing document** (or laws to create a country) they felt that freedom of religion was very important. Freedom of religion is also sometimes called **separation of church and state**. Separation of church and state means that religion (also called the “church”) and government (also called the “state”) are separate and independent and should not work too closely together. For example, it is **unconstitutional** (or against the law) for Congress to make a law that says Americans have to **attend (or go to) a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or any other place where people meet for religious purposes**. The government also cannot **endorse** one religious group over another, meaning that the government cannot tell Americans which religion it thinks is the best. Either of these things would **violate** (or go against) Americans’ freedom of religion.

The United States was one of the first countries in the world to have freedom of religion. Today, this is one of the most important freedoms in the United States. About seventy-five percent of Americans are **Christians**, but other religions such as **Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism** are also practiced by many people in the U.S., while some people don’t follow any religion at all. Because religious freedom is **widespread** and accepted in most areas and by most people in the country, **religious diversity** (or the existence of many different religions in the same place at the same time) has become normal in this country. The men who wrote the Constitution and passed the amendments in the **Bill of Rights** were mostly white, wealthy, **Protestant Christians**. They would have had no way of knowing how much religious diversity the U.S. would have many, many years later as a result of their creating freedom of religion.

Freedom of religion has always been a controversial topic (or a topic that is often argued over because people have many different opinions). Even in recent years, there have been many legal questions about whether religion belongs in school and in public places. Not everyone agrees on how religion and government should be separated, and the courts continue to change how they **interpret** (or understand) freedom of religion.



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Glossary

10. What is freedom of religion?

to practice (a religion) – to follow the teachings of a religion; to be part of a religion and do what it tells people to do

* Do you practice Catholicism?

to flee – to run away from something or someone, usually to leave a dangerous or difficult situation; to leave a dangerous or difficult situation

* Thousands of people began to flee the area when they heard that a big hurricane was coming.

governing document – the law or laws that create a country, a business, or an organization, saying what kind of government or management it will have and how it will work

* Have you read the governing document for our new organization?

separation of church and state – the idea that religion and government should be separate and independent, not working together closely

* Because of the separation of church and state, American students do not pray while they are at school.

unconstitutional – against the Constitution; against the law

* It would be unconstitutional for someone to be president of the United States for more than eight years.

to endorse – for a person or organization to support something and say that it is better than other things, sharing that opinion with many people

* This toothpaste is endorsed by the American Dental Association.

to violate – to do something that is not allowed; to break a rule or law; to go against a rule or law

* You violated the law when you drove past the stop sign without stopping.

widespread – common and found in most places or almost everywhere

* There was widespread panic in New York City and much of the rest of the country after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

religious diversity – the existence of many different religions in the same place at the same time

* Our university has a lot of religious diversity, with many Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and Buddhist students.



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11. What is the economic system in the United States?

Answer:

- Capitalist economy
- Market economy

Explanation:

If you want to start a business, maybe by opening a **restaurant** or a clothing store, the United States is a good place to do it. This is because the U.S. has a capitalist, or market, economy, making it acceptable and fairly easy for **private entities** (or individuals and businesses that are not owned by the government) to buy, sell, and **trade things** for money without **government interference** (or involvement by the government). In the U.S., the government doesn't decide how much things should cost or how much of something should be **produced** (or made). Instead, prices and production are decided based on a system called **supply and demand**, which refers to how much of a thing exists and how many people want to have that thing. How do we know how much supply and demand there is for a product? There are two important factors. The first is **profit** (or money a business gets by selling something), and the second is **self-interest, which is** when a person makes decisions based on what is best for him or herself, without paying attention to what is best for other people.

A man named Adam Smith **is considered the** father of American capitalism. He wrote about his ideas in a famous book called The Wealth of Nations. He believed that a capitalist system is run by an **invisible hand**. The invisible hand is the idea that there is no need for government interference in the economy because the self-interest of individuals will serve the **greater good** (or the **maximum benefits** for everyone in society).

To understand this idea, imagine that a store near your home sells a piece of candy for \$20. You think that this price is too high, but it is the only place to buy candy, so if you want candy, you have to pay the \$20. However, if the store across the street begins selling the same piece of candy for \$1, you will **act in your own self-interest** and buy the less expensive candy. The more expensive store will be forced to lower its candy prices to **compete** with the cheaper store, or else it won't sell any candy and won't make any profit. In this situation, everyone involved has acted out of self-interest, and the final result is a lower price for candy. The lower prices will **serve** the greater good of everyone in the neighborhood, because everyone can buy more candy. This is the basic **principle** (or explanation) behind the invisible hand and the United States' market economy.



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Glossary

11. What is the economic system in the United States?

private entity – an individual or a business that is not owned by the government

* Government agencies don't have to pay taxes, but private entities do.

government interference – involvement by the government, usually when people or organizations do not want the government to become involved

* Why is there so much government interference in electricity pricing?

to be produced – to be made, manufactured, or created

* How many cigarettes were produced in the United States last year?

supply and demand – a way of talking about how much of a thing exists, how many people want to have that thing, and how much they are willing to pay for it

* According to idea of supply and demand, if many people want a lot of something, it will be very expensive, but as more companies begin making it, it will become less expensive.

profit – the money that a business makes by selling things after everything else has been paid for

* Each time I sell a sweater for \$45, I make a profit of \$20, since it costs \$25 to make the sweater.

self-interest – making decisions based on what is best for oneself

* If I were acting out of self-interest, I would keep all my money for myself, but I think it is important to share my money with my family.

invisible hand – the idea that there is no need for the government to be very involved in the economy because the natural actions of buyers and sellers will automatically make sure that the right things are being sold at the right prices

* Many people want to buy computers so more companies are making more of them, causing the price to go down. This is an example of the invisible hand.

greater good – maximum benefits or good things for everyone in society

* Few people want to pay more taxes, but if the money is used to help people, then it's for the greater good, don't you think?

principle – explanation; the reason why something happens; the idea behind something

* In physics, the uncertainty principle says that we cannot know exactly how quickly something is moving and exactly where it is at the same time.



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12. What is the “rule of law”?

Answer:

- Everyone must follow the law
- Leaders must obey the law
- Government must obey the law
- No one is above the law

Explanation:

More than 800 years ago, in a city in England, a group of men got together to create a new kind of government. At the time, England was ruled by a king, but the king did not follow the same laws as the rest of the people. So these men wrote a document called the **Magna Carta**, which said that the king must obey (or follow) the same laws as everyone else. This idea we now call "the rule of law."

Many years later, in 1787, the people who **drafted** (or planned in writing) the Constitution used the Magna Carta as part of its system of government for the new United States. These people believed in a government for the people and by the people (or a government created and run by American citizens), so the rule of law was **put in place** (or established) to protect against **totalitarianism** (or a type of government in which almost everything is controlled by the government) or against **mob rule** (control of the government by a large group of people, usually using violence to get power). Early Americans felt that the rule of law was **central** (or very important) to the concept of democracy. They felt that **equality**, which is the idea that everyone should be treated in the same way under the law, was the only way to be fair to all Americans in all **aspects** (or parts) of life.

In the United States today, police officers, the president, normal citizens, and everyone else must follow the same laws. No matter how much money or power a person has, he or she cannot be **exempt** from following (or not have to follow) the law. The “rule of law” also means that all Americans have the right to the same protections under the law. This idea of equal protection under the law is known as **due process**.

Due process is one of the rights guaranteed to all Americans in the Bill of Rights. Rights such as freedom of speech and freedom of religion are better known, but due process is one of the most commonly used rights in the United States. In fact, these are some common phrases that Americans use to express the ideas of due process and the rule of law: “Everyone is equal in the eyes of the law” and “Justice (or the legal system) is blind.”



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Glossary

12. What is the “rule of law”?

Magna Carta – a document written in England in 1215 that made the King follow laws of the country

* We can see a copy of the Magna Carta at the National Archives in Washington, DC.

to draft – to plan something in writing; to begin to write a document

* How long did it take to draft the company report?

to put in place – to establish something; to implement something

* When Jacquie began working as the manager, she put in place many new rules.

totalitarianism – a type of government in which almost everything is controlled by the government

* Our history teacher said that Nazi Germany is an example of totalitarianism.

mob rule – control of the government by a large group of people, usually using violence to get power

* Some people worry that if a government is very weak, it encourages mob rule.

central – very important; main part; critical

* Getting people to vote is central for a democracy to work well.

equality – the idea that everyone should be treated in the same way under the law

* In the past, women were not allowed to vote, so they had to fight for equality with men.

aspect – a part of something; one way of looking at something

* For me, the worst aspect of being a manager is having to tell people that they aren't doing their work well enough.

to be exempt from (something) – to not have to follow something; to not have something be applicable to oneself

* In the United States, most churches are exempt from paying property taxes.

due process – the idea of equal protection under the law, and that the government must respect all of a person's rights and follow rules

* All Americans can expect the government to follow due process if they have to go to court.



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B: System of Government

13. Name one branch or part of the government.

Answer:

- Congress/legislative
- President/executive
- The courts/judicial

Explanation:

The United States government is divided into three **branches** (or parts), and all three share **equal** (or the same) amounts of power. The easiest way to understand the **divisions** (or parts) of American government is to think of the government as a tree, with three branches of the same size growing from the trunk (or the base, which is the biggest part of the tree). The government was set up this way in the Constitution by the Founding Fathers so that no one branch of government would be able to have **absolute power** (or total control) over another.

The first of the three branches of government is Congress, which is also known as the legislative branch. Legislative is another word for **lawmaking**, so Congress is the branch that makes and passes (or approves) laws. Congress also has the power to control how the government spends its money, known as **appropriations**. The legislative branch is located in the U.S. Capitol building, a famous building with a dome roof (or round top) in Washington, D.C.

The second branch is the executive branch, which is the president of the United States. Executive means “leader,” so it is the president’s job to lead the country and its **military** (or the people and organizations who fight for a country, usually to protect it). The vice president, the president’s top **advisor** (or most trusted guide), is also an important part of the executive branch. The president lives and works in the White House, which is also located in Washington, D.C. The executive branch also includes all of the departments, agencies, and government organizations that help carry out or put into practice the laws of the United States.

The third branch of government is the judicial (or legal) branch, also known as the courts. The **Supreme Court** in Washington, D.C. is the highest or most powerful court in the judicial branch, but there are also many smaller federal (or national) courts. All of these courts interpret (or decide how to understand) and explain the laws passed by Congress.

Each division of the government holds separate and different powers, but the three branches are all part of the same tree and are all necessary for making sure that the United States’ system of government continues to work.



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Glossary

13. Name one branch or part of the government.

branch – a part of something, usually of the government or an organization; one of many parts

* Most American children learn about the three branches of government when they are in elementary school.

equal – the same; not different

* Do you and your wife do an equal amount of work in the home, or do you clean more than she does?

division – a separate part of something; a major part or section of an organization

* My husband and I work for the same company. I work in the research division and he works in the marketing division.

absolute power – total control; having all of the power; unshared power

* The little boy sometimes wished that he had absolute power in life so that he could play all day, get dirty, and eat nothing but pizza and ice cream.

lawmaking – legislative; related to making new laws and changing existing laws

* Who has lawmaking power for the city?

appropriations – related to how the government decides how it will spend its money

* Congress has been arguing over appropriation for months.

military – the people and organizations who fight for a country, usually to protect it

* Have you thought about joining the U.S. military after you finish high school?

advisor – a trusted guide; a person who gives advice and shares his or her opinions and beliefs

* Who is the president's advisor on education?

Supreme Court – the highest, most powerful court in the United States

* Only the most important legal questions are ruled on by the Supreme Court.



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14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?

Answer:

- Checks and balances
- Separation of powers

Explanation:

The people who created the U.S. government wanted a way to make sure that no one branch (or part) of the government becomes too powerful. They built a **system** of **checks and balances**, also known as a separation of powers, into the Constitution.

We can find one example of checks and balances in the United States' process for making laws. Congress, or the legislative branch, is responsible for making and passing (or approving) laws. But what if Congress writes and passes a law that is unconstitutional (or that doesn't follow the Constitution), such as a law that says that Americans no longer have freedom of speech? If a law like this were passed, the President as part of the executive branch could **veto** (or cancel) the law. Another way to stop this law would be for the Supreme Court, part of the judicial branch, to say that it is against the Constitution, using its power of judicial review (or the power to **overturn** or undo laws passed by Congress). In this example, you can see that when one branch tries to do something that does not follow the Constitution, one or both of the other branches can stop that from happening.

Another good example of the separation of powers is the process by which a person becomes a **Supreme Court justice** (or a judge on the Supreme Court, the most powerful court in the U.S.). A **prospective** (or potential or possible) Justice is first **appointed** (or chosen) by the president. Congress must then approve of this appointment by getting a **majority vote**, which means that more than 50% of Congress must vote "yes" for the prospective judge. After receiving approval from Congress, the justice serves a **life term** (or for the rest of his or her life) on the Supreme Court. As a Supreme Court judge, he or she can make decisions based on what the Constitution says, without worrying about what Congress or the President think. This way, the Justice can help overturn a law passed by Congress or decide that one of the president's actions does not follow the law, without worrying about losing his or her job!



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Glossary

14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?

system – a way of doing something; a set of procedures or steps for how things should be done

* Laila has such a great organizational system that she always knows where everything is.

checks and balances – the separation of powers in the U.S. government so that none of the three parts of the government has total control over everything and each part has about the same level of power

* One example of checks and balances in the U.S. government is that the president has to approve the things that Congress wants to put into law.

veto – to reject; to cancel; to say that something should not be allowed to happen

* The children wanted to have soda for breakfast, but their mother vetoed that idea.

to overturn – to undo something; to use one's power to undo what another person or organization has done

* When the prince became king, he overturned many of the laws that his father had made.

Supreme Court justice – a judge on the supreme court, which is the most powerful court in the United States

* Yevgeny is going to law school because he wants to become a Supreme Court justice.

prospective – potential; possible

* Melissa calls at least 10 prospective buyers every day, trying to sell the company's products.

appointed – chosen for and given a position by someone with a lot of power

* Who was appointed as the new dean of the College of Sciences?

majority vote – a vote where more than 50% of the voters say "yes" to something

* Nobody won the majority vote, since even the most popular candidate got only 43% of the vote.

life term – a period of time that lasts for the rest of one's life, usually until one dies or until one decides that one does not want to continue doing something

* In the United States, the president can never have a life term, since he or she can have only two four-year terms.



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15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?

Answer:

The President

Explanation:

Many people know who the president of the United States is, but what does the president do? The president is the person in charge of (or responsible for) the executive branch. The president's main job is to be the **commander-in-chief**, which means that he or she commands, or is the top leader of, the United States **armed forces** (or military). As commander-in-chief, the president has the power to send troops (or soldiers) to fight overseas (or in another country) at any time, but he or she can't officially declare (or decide on) a war without the approval (or agreement) of Congress.

The president is also known as the **head of state**. The head of any organization is the person who is in charge, and is the most important and powerful person in that organization. So as the head of state, the president is responsible for developing important relationships with leaders of other countries.

Another of the president's powers is the ability to appoint (or choose) people to serve in the government. The most important people the president appoints are the members of his or her **cabinet** (or the group of people who give the president advice). The most powerful person in the president's cabinet is the vice president. If the president dies or is unable to **perform his responsibilities** (or do his job) for any reason, the vice president must lead the country and its military.

The president has a lot of power, so there are some important requirements for the job. To become president, a person must be at least 35 years old, born in the United States, and must have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years. Once a president is elected (or chosen by the voters), his or her **term of office** (or the length of time that he or she has the job) is four years. A president cannot serve more than two terms, for a total of eight years. This **term limit** (or the maximum number of years that a person can be president) is established in the 22nd Amendment, which was added to the Constitution in 1951. This limit exists for the same reason that checks and balances exist: to make sure that no one person (in this case, the president) can **wield** (or hold or use) too much power in the government.



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Glossary

15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?

commander-in-chief – the person who leads a country's military (in the United States, this is the President)

* The President of the United States is always the country's commander-in-chief, even if he or she doesn't have any military experience.

armed forces – the military; the people and organizations who fight for a country, usually to protect it

* The U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard are all parts of the U.S. Armed Forces.

head of state – the most important political leader of a country

* The President of the United States usually welcomes other heads of state in a very formal ceremony.

cabinet – a group of people who give advice, information, and ideas to the U.S. president on many important issues

* How often does the President meet with his Cabinet members?

to perform (one's) responsibilities – to do one's job; to be able to do one's job

* Luis performs his responsibilities as store manager with patience and professionalism.

term of office – the length of time that a person has a job; the amount of time that someone is allowed to have a job

* The Chairman of the Board of Directors has a five-year term of office.

term limit – the maximum number of years that a person can work in a particular job

* U.S. Senators do not have a term limit, so they can be Senator for as long as they want to.

to wield – to hold or use

* The teacher wields his authority over the students very effectively and there are never any problems in his classroom.



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16. Who makes federal laws?

Answer:

- Congress
- Senate and House (of Representatives)
- (U.S. or national) legislature

Explanation:

Making a federal (or national) law in the United States is a **complex** (or complicated and not simple) process that takes a lot of time. This is good, because it means that the laws can't be easily changed. New laws can be made only when a lot of people agree that they are a good idea.

Federal (or national) laws can be made only by the national legislature (or the part of the government that makes laws), which is known as **Congress**. Congress is a **bicameral** legislature, meaning that it has two chambers (or parts). The two parts are the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate and the House are equal partners, meaning that they have the same amount of power. A law cannot be **enacted** (or created) without the **consent** (or agreement) of both chambers.

When people want to create a new law, they speak with their senator or representative, who will then write a **bill**, which is a proposal or an idea for a new law. That bill is given a special number to identify it and then copies are made for all the people in that chamber. Then the bill is sent to a **committee** (or a small group of people working together for a specific purpose) that specializes in that topic. The committee discusses (or talks about) the bill and the committee can make changes to the bill if it wants to. Then it tells the full chamber what it thinks about whether the bill should become a law.

Next, the full chamber **debates** (or talks about the reasons for or against the bill) and votes on the bill. If the bill passes (or is approved) in one chamber, then it is sent to the other chamber. For example, if it passes in the Senate, then it is sent to the House of Representatives. Just like in the other chamber, a committee discusses the bill and might make changes before it is debated and voted on by the full chamber. If the second chamber also approves the bill, then committees from both chambers meet to **work out the differences** (or to find a way to agree) on the two different versions of the bill.

Once the final version of the bill is passed in both chambers, both the House and the Senate, it is sent to the president. If the president signs it, then the bill becomes a law.



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Glossary

16. Who makes federal laws?

complex – complicated; not simple; with many different parts that are not easy to understand

* Many math teachers believe that algebra isn't as complex as calculus is.

Congress – the legislative (lawmaking) part of the U.S. government; the group of elected national representatives

* How many representatives does your state have in Congress?

bicameral – with two chambers or parts; an organization with two major parts

* Does your country's government have just one part where laws are made, or is it bicameral like the U.S. Congress?

to enact – to create; to make

* When did the United States enact a law to allow women to vote?

consent – agreement; permission to do something or to allow something to happen

* When Jimmie asked whether he could use the car, his father nodded in consent.

bill – a proposal or an idea for a new law

* Some people want Congress to discuss a bill that would make it legal to use some illegal drugs for medical treatment.

committee – a small group of people working together for a specific purpose

* Darcy is working on the party committee, helping to organize the high school's year-end dance.

to debate – to talk about the reasons for or against doing or supporting something

* They spent months debating whether they should buy a home or continue to rent an apartment.

to work out the differences – to find a way to agree on something

* Even though they love each other very much, they need to find a way to work out their differences before they get married.



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17. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?

Answer:

The Senate and House (of Representatives)

Explanation:

In the United States, the word **Congress** is used to refer to (or talk about) the legislative (or lawmaking) part of American government. Most people know this meaning of the word. But did you know that there is another meaning of the word congress? Congress also means a meeting of **legislators** (or the people who make laws). In the U.S. government, you will hear both meanings of this word used. In fact, a new congress—meaning a new meeting—starts every two years. The first congress was held in 1774. The current congress, then, is the 110th Congress, which first **convened** (or met) on January 4, 2007.

When the first congress was held in 1774, Congress was still **unicameral**, meaning that it had only one part or group of legislators. However, the leaders of the country very quickly realized (or noticed) that the new American government was not very efficient (or didn't do things very quickly or very well), so they wanted to change the system.

One of the major **disputes** (or disagreements) about Congress was how the 50 states would be represented in the federal (or national) government. People from small states thought that each state should be represented **equally** (or in the same way). People from large states thought that states with a higher population (or more people living there) should have more power to make decisions. The **solution** (or the way to fix the problem) was to write a new constitution (or document that creates the government for a country) and make the Congress become **bicameral** (or with two parts).

How does a bicameral Congress allow people in large and small states to have better representation? The answer is in how the Congress works. The two parts of the Congress are the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate has equal **representation**, which means that each state has two representatives. The House of Representatives is different: larger states have more representatives and smaller states have fewer. The Senate and the House of Representatives have to work together to make new laws. This way, neither big nor small states have more power than other states. With this solution, both sides of the dispute were **satisfied** (or pleased).



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Glossary

17. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?

Congress – the legislative (lawmaking) part of the U.S. government; the group of elected national representatives

* How many new laws did Congress make last year?

legislator – a person who makes laws

* Do you think that legislators really understand how that law will affect everyone in the country?

to convene – to have everyone meet in a group; to create a meeting and to invite the members or other people to come

* Let's convene the meeting at 8:15 on Monday.

unicameral – with only one part or group; an organization with only one major part

* Do you know if Denmark has a unicameral parliament?

dispute – disagreement; argument

* Kiki's parents had a big dispute about whether she should be allowed to stay out later than 11:30 p.m.

equally – in the same way; fairly

* The six children cut the cake into six pieces to share it equally.

solution – a way to fix a problem; an answer to a problem

* When Pierre's glasses broke, his temporary solution was to tape the two pieces together.

bicameral – with two chambers or parts; an organization with two major parts

* Laws are made more slowly in bicameral governments, because they have to be approved by two separate groups of people.

representation – having someone officially make decisions and vote for another person or for a group of people

* The students say that they don't have enough representation in the administration's decision-making.

satisfied – pleased; content

* Were you satisfied with the service you received while you were staying at the hotel?



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18. How many U.S. Senators are there?

Answer:

One hundred (100)

Explanation:

The government of the United States was founded (or created) on the idea that the people who live in a country should be able to participate in the government. However, more than three hundred million people live in the United States. It would be **virtually** (or almost) impossible to get all of those people to meet together and make decisions as such a large group. That is why the U.S. government is based on a system of **representation**, with a few people voting and making decisions for larger groups of people. This representation is in two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Senate has only 100 representatives and they are called senators. These senators represent the three hundred million people who live in the United States. This is a big job! Two senators are elected (or chosen) from each state, no matter how many people live in each state. This gives all fifty states equal representation. When people want to participate in their government, they should **contact** (or speak with or write to) their senators and other representatives.

Each of the senators has only one vote, so one senator is not more powerful than another senator. However, there are some special **roles** (or positions) in the Senate. For example, the vice president of the United States is the president of the Senate, but can vote only to **break a tie**, which is when an equal number of senators vote for and against something. The senators also elect a **president pro tem** who acts as the president of the Senate when the vice president of the United States cannot participate.

A **political party** is a group of people who have the same political beliefs and belong to the same political organization. In the U.S., there are currently two major political parties: the Democrats and the Republicans. In the Senate, each political party elects a leader. The leader of the party with the most number of senators is known as the majority leader and the leader for the party with fewer senators is called the minority leader. These people are sometimes called the floor leaders. They are the **spokespeople**, or the people who represent the political party in public.



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Glossary

18. How many U.S. Senators are there?

virtually – almost; nearly; practically

* It was virtually impossible to get everyone to agree on which restaurant we would go to for dinner last night.

representation – having someone officially make decisions and vote for another person or for a group of people

* In a country with representation, it is very important for people to vote and decide who will represent them in making decisions.

to contact (someone) – to speak with someone or write to someone

* Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about our products.

a role – a position; a job; a function

* The project manager's role is to make sure that the engineers finish their work on time, without spending too much money.

to break a tie – to vote only when an equal number of people vote for or against something, so that one's vote decides the result

* Normally the four children vote to decide what to play, but when they cannot agree, their mother breaks the tie.

president pro tem – the member of the U.S. Senate who acts as the president of the Senate when the vice president of the United States cannot participate

* It is an honor to be named the president pro tem.

political party – a group of people who have the same political beliefs and belong to the same political organization

* Which political party do you belong to?

spokesperson – a person who officially represents and communicates to the public for a business, organization, or group

* When the company was having a lot of problems, only the spokesperson was allowed to speak to the reporters and journalists.



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19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?

Answer:

Six (6)

Explanation:

U.S. senators **serve** (or work in their public position) for six-year terms that are **staggered**, which means they don't all begin and end at the same time. One-third of the senators are elected every two years. With staggered terms, there are always some senators who have experience and can guide the new senators. This gives the Senate continuity.

In any organization, **continuity** (or the way that something stays the same over time) is extremely important. The United States Senate **is no exception** (or no different). If all the senators started and ended their **terms** (or the period of time they work in their public position) at the same time, then all the new senators would begin at the same time and nobody, or only very few people, would know how Senate meetings should be. All of the senators would be trying to learn their new job at the same time and the Senate would not run very smoothly or easily until they did.

State legislators (or people who make laws in the government at the state level) used to elect (or choose) senators. However, since 1913, senators have been elected directly by the votes of the citizens who live in their state. Once a senator is elected, he or she can serve for the full six years before having to **run for election** (or try to get the public position through votes) again. Sometimes, however, senators are **expelled** (or forced to leave) before their term ends. This has happened only 15 times so far and the last time was in 1862. Since then, the Senate has tried to expel some senators, but those senators have **resigned** (or chosen to leave that job) before the other senators could make them leave.

When a **vacancy** (or an open position) is available, maybe because a senator has resigned or died, there is usually a special election to find a new senator to represent that state. Senators who are elected this way finish the time left in the previous senator's six-year term and usually do not serve the full six years.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?

to serve – to work in a public position; to work in a government job

* Colin Powell was the first African American to serve as the U.S. Secretary of State.

staggered – beginning and ending at different times

* If all of the students registered for classes on the same day, the computer system would be very slow, so instead, their registration is staggered by the first letter of their last name.

continuity – the way that something stays the same over time

* The hospital tries to give patients continuity when they are moved from one department to another.

to be no exception – to be no different; to be the same

* Everyone has to get at least 60% to pass the test, and your son is no exception.

term – the length of time that a person has a job

* How long is the term for the mayor of New York City?

to run for election – to try to be elected to a public position; to try to get a public job through votes

* Did you ever run for election to the student government at your school?

to expel – to force someone to leave an organization

* The student was expelled from high school when he brought a gun to school.

to resign – to chose to leave a job; to choose to leave a public position before one has finished the normal period of time

* When the company president found out that she had cancer, she resigned so that she could get treatment.

vacancy – an open position; an opening, especially in an organization

* Do you know if there are any vacancies in the company's marketing department?
I'd love to work there.



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20. Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators?

Answer:

Answers will vary. [For District of Columbia residents and residents of U.S. territories, the answer is that D.C. (or the territory where the applicant lives) has no U.S. Senators.]

Explanation:

If you are walking outdoors in the United States, especially in front of a university, library, or public building, don't be too **surprised** (or shocked) if you are asked to participate in a **letter-writing campaign** to your U.S. Senator. American citizens who are unhappy about something that the government is doing can communicate (or speak) with their representatives, which include senators from their state. A letter-writing campaign is an attempt to get many people to write to their senator on a single topic. For organizations, writing letters to senators or other representatives is an effective way to do **advocacy** (or to show what they think and to tell the government how things should be done).

When the Senate is going to vote on an important topic, some advocacy groups start a letter-writing campaign to show that the issue is important and to try to get a senator to vote a certain way. When a senator receives many letters from his or her **constituency** (or the people who live in an area that the senator represents), then the senator knows that the topic is important for many of the people who elected him or her. This information might help the senator decide to vote a certain way.

Sometimes the people who organize letter-writing campaigns have **pre-printed** (or already written) letters that people can just **sign** (or write one's name) and send to the senator's office. Other organizations **request** (or ask) that people write their own letter. This is more effective than a pre-printed letter, because it shows the senator that that person cares enough about the topic to take the time to write a letter about it. Sometimes people also call their senator's office when they have strong feelings about a topic.

If you are a citizen of the United States and you want to find out who your senator is and to get his or her **contact information**, such as their address, telephone number, or email address, you can go to the official website for the U.S. Senate and look at the list of senators representing all 50 states.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

20. Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators?

surprised – shocked because something happened but was not expected

* Marandah was surprised when her husband brought home roses for her last night.

letter-writing campaign – an attempt to get many people to write to someone on a single topic, usually to change that person's opinion about something or to ask him or her to do something related to that topic

* Virginia organized a letter-writing campaign to get the Senator to vote to renew the Clean Air Act.

advocacy – efforts to show people what one thinks and to tell the government how things should be done; public support for a cause or issue

* After their son was shot, they became involved in anti-gun advocacy programs.

constituency – the group of voters in a specific area; the people who live in an area that an elected official represents

* Senator DeFazio's constituency is growing rapidly as more people move to the area.

pre-printed – already written and printed

* The bank gives its customers pre-printed checks when they open a new bank account.

to sign (something) – to write one's name on something, usually to show approval or agreement

* Please make sure that you've signed the check before you mail it to us.

to request – to ask someone to do something; to ask for something

* The hiring manager requested telephone numbers for three of my previous employers.

contact information – information about how one can be reached, such as one's address, telephone number, fax number, or email address

* Do you think it's a good idea to put your contact information on the Internet where other people can find it?



Introduction to the United States
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21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?

Answer:

Four hundred thirty-five (435)

Explanation:

Americans live all over the United States, but some places are much more popular than others. For example, more than 35 million people live in California, but only about 500,000 people live in Wyoming. One of the **challenges** (or difficult things to do) in the U.S. government is to let big and small states participate in the government fairly. Is it fair to give both states equal participation in the government? Or should California have more power than Wyoming since it has so many more people?

The people who created the U.S. government decided that they would have to answer 'yes' to both questions. They created the Senate, where each state has equal power no matter how big or small it is, and they created the House of Representatives, where states with more people have more power than states with fewer people.

The House of Representatives currently has 435 **representatives**, or people who are elected (or chosen by large groups of people) to make decisions for their states. Congress can pass a law to change the total number of representatives if it wants to, but the number hasn't changed from 435 since 1910. Larger states have more representatives than smaller states do. Right now, California has the most, with 53 representatives. Several of the smallest states, such as Wyoming, Montana, and North and South Dakota, have only one representative each.

The U.S. government does a **census** every few years, which is an official count of the number of people living in the country. After each census, how many representatives each state gets of the 435 **seats** (or positions) in the House of Representatives is redone. This means that states that have grown may get more representatives and states that have **shrunk** (or become smaller) get fewer representatives. This process is called **apportionment**, which means deciding how something should be shared among many people or, in this case, among many states.

In addition to the 435 representatives, the House also has four **delegates** who can speak at the meetings but cannot vote. These delegates represent Washington, D.C. (the nation's capitol), and the country's **territories**, which are areas of land that belong to the United States but are not states.



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Glossary

21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?

challenge – something that is difficult to do, but also may be exciting

* Learning a new language is often the greatest challenge while living in another country.

representative – a person who is elected or chosen to make decisions for another person or for a group of people

* If you cannot come to the meeting, please send a representative who can vote for you.

census – an official count of the number of people living in an area

* According to the U.S. Census, more than 300 million people live in the United States.

seat – one of many positions, especially elected positions, in an organization

* How many seats in the U.S. Congress are currently filled by women?

to shrink – to become smaller in size or number

* Her jeans shrank after she washed them in very hot water.

apportionment – the way that something is shared among many people

* The head of the new international organization believes that there should be a fairer apportionment of money among people and countries.

delegate – representative; a person who is sent to a meeting or other event by and for another person

* Does Guam have a delegate in the U.S. Congress?

territory – an area of land that belongs to the United States but is not a state

* The Virgin Islands are a U.S. territory.



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22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?

Answer:

Two (2)

Explanation:

In most jobs, if you do your work well, you can continue working there almost as long as you like. In general, this is a good thing, but some people think that the United States Congress should be different. When we elect (or choose) a U.S. Representative, he or she works as a representative for only two years. This is known as his or her **term**, or the length of time that a person works in a public position. Once those two years have ended, if he or she wants to continue to work as a representative, he or she can be reelected for another two years. This can continue **indefinitely** (or forever or without end).

Some people think that this is a good idea, because it lets us **reward** representatives who do their work well by allowing them to continue to represent us. But other people believe that there should be a **term limit**, which would be a maximum number of times that a representative can be reelected for two-year terms. The U.S. President, for example, has a term limit and can be president for only two four-year terms, for a total of eight years.

The people who **advocate for** (or are in favor of) term limits believe that this would let more people participate in the House of Representatives, bringing new ideas and **enthusiasm** (or interest and desire to do something) to their work. Americans have **debated** (or argued for and against) term limits for many years, but there is still no agreement.

In 2003, a popular newspaper called the Wall Street Journal conducted (or carried out) a study about term limits and found that 2/3 of all Americans would like to have term limits in Congress. Because term limits are such a popular idea in many parts of the country, many representatives have **pledged** (or said that they would do something) to limit the number of terms that they **serve** (or work in a public position as representatives). However, there is no legal requirement for them to do this. It might, however, help them to get elected if this is something that is important to voters in their area.



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Glossary

22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?

term – the length of time that a person has a job

* Mr. President, are you going to run for another term?

indefinitely – lasting forever; without a clear end

* Do you plan to return to your country, or will you be staying in the United States indefinitely?

to reward – to give something nice, useful, and pleasant to someone because of something good that he or she has done

* When Benjamin got good grades, his parents rewarded him by taking him to his favorite restaurant.

term limit – the maximum number of years that a person can work in a particular job

* A king or queen has no term limit and can continue to be king or queen until death.

to advocate for (something) – to be in favor of something; to support something and want it to happen or be accepted

* Our organization advocates for laws that will protect children.

enthusiasm – interest and desire to do something

* Lex has a lot of enthusiasm for speaking in English with native speakers.

to debate – to talk about the reasons for or against doing or supporting something

* The members of the city government are debating whether people should be allowed to smoke in the city parks.

to pledge – to say that one will do something; to make a promise

* After his first heart attack, Davis pledged to stop eating unhealthy food and to start exercising.

to serve – to work in a public position; to work in a government job

* How many years has he served as the Governor of California?



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23. Name your U.S. Representative.

Answer:

Answers will vary. [Residents of territories with nonvoting Delegates or resident Commissioners may provide the name of that Delegate or Commissioner. Also acceptable is any statement that the territory has no (voting) Representatives in Congress.]

Explanation:

It's important for Americans to know not only *who* their U.S. Representative is, but also *how* he or she is representing them. Americans need to know how their representatives are voting and whether or not those votes accurately (or correctly) represent their interests. If the representative isn't voting the way that his or her **constituents** (or the people represented by a representative) want, then those constituents should vote for someone else in the next elections.

However, it could be difficult and **time-consuming** (or taking a lot of time) to find out how a representative is voting. That is because the U.S. Congress spends a lot of time talking about important issues and voting on many different **bills** (or ideas for new laws). A normal American wouldn't have time to read all of those bills and find out how his or her representative is voting. That would be a full-time job!

Fortunately, many organizations try to **gather** (or collect) this information, **summarize** it (or say the most important ideas in fewer words), and share that information with voters, so that they can make informed decisions. Some groups provide **biographical information** (or information about a person's life) about representatives, as well as their **voting records** (or a list of how a person has voted on all decisions during a certain period of time). People can quickly read this information to determine how well their representative is representing them.

The website for the U.S. House of Representatives provides the **roll call votes**, or lists of how representatives have voted over time. However, the other organizations make this information easier to understand, because they also explain what the votes mean for each bill and show changes in a representative's votes over time. Many people study the voting records published by these organizations before they decide who they want to vote for.



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Glossary

23. Name your U.S. Representative.

constituents – the people represented by an elected official; the people who live in an area that an elected official represents

* How many constituents do you represent?

time-consuming – taking a lot of time; needing or requiring a lot of time

* Her work isn't difficult, but it is very time-consuming.

bill – a proposal or an idea for a new law

* The state wants to introduce a new bill that would make everyone wear a seatbelt while driving.

to gather – to collect; to find many things and put them together

* The university is trying to gather information about where its former students are working.

to summarize – to say the most important ideas in fewer words

* Please read this magazine article and summarize it in just three sentences.

biographical information – information about a person's life; information about who a person is and what he or she has done

* This website has biographical information on many famous people.

voting record – a list of how a person has voted on all decisions during a certain period of time

* Will you read the Senator's voting record before you decide whether you will vote for him again?

roll call votes – a list of how each representative voted on a particular bill

* According to the roll call votes, 272 representatives voted for the law, 142 voted against it and 18 didn't vote on it.



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24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?

Answer:

All people of the state

Explanation:

Here's an interesting thing about the U.S. government: even if you vote against the person who wins an **election** (or a competition to see who gets the most votes and is chosen for a public position), he or she has to represent you! In other words, if you vote for person A to become senator, but person B wins, then person B must represent you just as if you had voted for him or her! That is why we say that U.S. senators represent all the people of a state.

How does a senator do this? **Obviously** (or clearly), a senator cannot meet and speak with all the people whom he or she represents. This would take up too much time and he or she would never be able to attend the Senate **sessions** (or meetings with other representatives). So, instead of speaking with everyone in the state, senators **rely on** (or depend on or use) opinion **polls** (or surveys or questionnaires) that show what most people in their state think about important topics. This is an easy way for a senator to know what most people think about a certain law without having to call everyone to ask.

Senators also try to create opportunities for interested voters to speak with them about **pressing issues** (or topics that they think are most important). Voters can always call, email, or write to their senators to share their opinions. Senators also have offices where they can meet with their **constituents** (or the people they represent). They normally have an office in Washington, D.C. where the Senate sessions are **held** (or where they happen), and at least one office in their state, usually in the most important city or cities. When Senate is **in session** (or having meetings), the senators are in Washington, D.C. The rest of the time, they are normally in their home states, speaking with voters and planning what they want to do the next time the Senate is in session.



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Glossary

24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?

election – a competition to see who gets the most votes and is chosen for a public position

* How many Americans voted in the last U.S. presidential election?

obviously – clearly; easily seen and understood

* Obviously, if you want to become a doctor, you have to go to medical school.

session – a meeting

* Did your senator attend all of the sessions last month?

to rely on (something) – to need and use something; to depend on something

* We rely on the public busses to get to work each day.

poll – a survey; a questionnaire; a question or a list of questions asked of many people to find out the opinions of a group or of the general public

* We're conducting a poll to learn what people think about our products. Are you willing to answer a few questions?

pressing issue – a topic that is extremely important

* The rising cost of healthcare is a pressing issue in the United States.

constituents – the people represented by an elected official; the people who live in an area that an elected official represents

* The Senator has meetings with his constituents each month to learn about what is most important to them.

to hold (a meeting) – to have a meeting at a particular time and place

* Their conference was held last Wednesday at the Grand Hotel.

in session – having a meeting

* Quiet, please! This court is now in session.



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25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?

Answer:

- (Because of) the state's population
- (Because) they have more people
- (Because) some states have more people

Explanation:

The fifty states of the United States have very different sizes, both **in terms of** (or related to) how much land there is and the **population** (or how many people there are). Some states are very large but have very few people; other states are very small but have many people. Even so, all fifty states need to be represented in the federal government.

What was the solution? The Founding Fathers, or the people who created the U.S. government, decided to have two parts for lawmaking. One is the Senate, where each state has two representatives known as senators, no matter how many people live there. The other is the House of Representatives, where the number of representatives that each state has is **proportional** to its population, meaning that states with large populations have more representatives in the House than those states with small populations.

Each state is divided into a number of **districts** (or areas), one for each representative that it has in the House. Each representative is elected by the people living in his or her district. Changing where the district **boundaries** (or the lines between districts) are drawn on the map can change which political party has more power in a district. **Redistricting**, or changing the district boundaries, is called **gerrymandering** when it influences (or affects) the results of elections so that one political party is more likely to win. As you can see, this is a very big issue because redistricting can decide which political party has power.

Sometimes gerrymandering is used to make district boundaries match (or be the same as) where **racial groups** (or groups of people with the same skin color) live. If the district boundaries are drawn so that white people are the **majority** (the largest group) in each district, then it is more likely that only white representatives will be elected. Obviously gerrymandering is unfair, but it is very common in modern politics. Many have **criticized** this practice of racial gerrymandering.



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Glossary

25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?

in terms of – related to; measured by

* How do you like your job in terms of salary and health benefits?

population – the number of people who live in a particular area

* The world has a population of more than six billion people.

proportional – with the correct or corresponding size or amount of something

* The president said that taxes that people pay should be proportional to the amount of money they make, so that people who make a lot of money pay more taxes than do people who make very little money.

district – area; a large part or section of a bigger area

* Which school district is your high school in?

boundary – a line drawn on a map between two areas, separating them and showing where one ends and the other begins

* Fremont Street is the boundary between the Irvington and Sabin neighborhoods.

redistricting – the process of changing where one district begins and another district ends, or the process of creating new districts or removing old ones

* As more people move to the cities, redistricting will become important.

gerrymandering – the process of changing where one district begins and another district ends based on what people believe in in certain areas to influence or affect the results of an election

* He would never have been re-elected if there hadn't been so much gerrymandering in his state.

racial groups – groups of people with the same heritage, skin color, eye color, and/or facial features

* This report gives information about the buying habits of different racial groups in major cities.

majority – the bigger part of something; more than 50% of something

* In the United States, the majority of mothers have to work outside the home.

to criticize – to say something bad about something; to say something negative about something; to say that something is bad or wrong

* The professor criticized her students for not following the assignment guidelines.



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26. We elect a President for how many years?

Answer:

Four (4)

Explanation:

Many of the people who came to North America and later created the U.S. government had come from countries that had kings. Many of those kings had too much power and they **abused** (or used in a bad way) their power, because they knew that they would be king for their entire life. That's why, when it was time to create the new U.S. government, our Founding Fathers didn't want to have any more kings, or even a president who acted like a king. They didn't want anyone to be able to become president for the rest of his or her life, so they made a **term** of four years, meaning that a U.S. president can be president for four years and then has to be elected again.

But how many times can a president be re-elected? The **original** (or first and unchanged) Constitution didn't say. Our first president, George Washington, was president for two terms, or a total of eight years. Then he decided that he didn't want to **run for office** (or try to be elected) again. When he did this, he set a **precedent**, or a way of doing things that other people followed. For many years, no other president ran for more than two terms. Presidents Ulysses Grant and Theodore Roosevelt tried to run for a third term, but they were unsuccessful. In 1940, however, President Franklin Roosevelt became the first president to be elected for a third term. Actually, he even won a fourth term and could have served for 16 years total, but he died **in office** early in his fourth term.

After he died, Congress (or the lawmaking part of the U.S. government) decided that it didn't want anyone to be able to be president for more than two terms because it would give the president too much power. They created what would become the 22nd Constitutional **Amendment** (or a change or addition to the constitution), which states that no one can be elected to the **office** (or position) of president more than twice (or two times). The Amendment was created by Congress in 1947, and ratified (or approved) by the states in 1951.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

26. We elect a President for how many years?

to abuse – to use something in a bad way; to use too much of one's power

* The company's president abuses his position by making people do things that they wouldn't normally want to do.

term – the length of time that a person has a job

* How long is the superintendent's term?

original – first and unchanged; the form in which something was first created

* Is this the original building or was it rebuilt after the fire?

to run for office – to try to be elected to a public position; to try to get a public job through votes

* Would you ever consider running for office in your state?

precedent – something that was done in the past and is used as a reason for doing things the same way later

* I hope Donna doesn't set a precedent for the rest of us by working late every night without extra pay.

in office – while working in a public position

* What were his most important accomplishments in office?

amendment – a change or addition, especially to the U.S. Constitution

* Our client wanted to add three amendments to the contract before she signed it.

office – a public position; a public job

* Which job is more difficult, being the Secretary of State or the Secretary of the Treasury?



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

27. In what month do we vote for President?

Answer:

November

Explanation:

In the United States, the president has to be re-elected every four years. The elections **take place** (or are held) every four years in November. Every U.S. citizen who is at least 18 years old can **vote** for president (or say who he or she would like to become president).

U.S. citizens have to **register** (or sign up) to be able to vote. They need to fill out a **voter registration card** (or form) with their name and address. With just one voter registration card, you can register to vote in national, state, and local elections.

On election day, registered voters can go to the **voting booth** that they have been assigned to (or asked to go to). At the voting booth, they get a **ballot**, or a piece of paper with the names of people who are running for office (or trying to get a public position). On this ballot, they **indicate** (or show) which person they would like to vote for. Doing this is known as **casting a ballot**.

In many states, voters are allowed to vote by mail. They don't need to go to a voting booth. Instead, a ballot is mailed to their home. They need to fill it out and mail it to the correct address **by** (or before) a certain date to have their vote counted (or included) in the election. U.S. citizens who are living in other countries can also vote by mail.

Unlike in some other countries, voting is optional in the United States, meaning that people can choose to do it, but they don't have to. Many people choose not to vote and never fill out a voter registration card. In the 2004 presidential elections, only 60% of **eligible voters** voted, meaning that 60% of all the people who could vote did. Many organizations try to get more people to register to vote and participate in the elections, because they believe that our government would be stronger if more people voted.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

27. In what month do we vote for President?

to take place – to happen; to occur

* The reception will take place immediately after the wedding.

to vote – to say whom one would like to have enter a public office; to say whom one would like to have work in a public job

* Did you vote for the new proposal to give more money to schools?

to register – to sign up for something; to put one's name on a list to be able to do something

* Let's go register for classes before the classes we want are full.

voter registration card – a form that one writes information on to be allowed to vote

* Will I need to fill out a new voter registration card when I move?

voting booth – a place where people go to vote; a tall box or area with one open side where people go to vote

* Each voting booth has curtains hanging around it so that people can vote without others seeing who or what they are voting for.

ballot – a piece of paper with the names of people who are trying to get a public office and/or the laws that are being voted on

* There should be only one ballot for each voter.

to indicate – to show something; to make something clear

* That sign indicates that the meeting will be in Conference Room B.

to cast a ballot – to vote; to complete a ballot and give it to the officials

* Only a small percentage of Americans choose to cast a ballot in their local elections.

by – before a date; before something else happens

* Please send me your report by 5:00 p.m.

eligible voter – a person who is allowed to vote; a person who meets all of the requirements to vote

* Can an American in jail be an eligible voter?



Introduction to the United States
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28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?

Answer:

- George W. Bush
- George Bush
- Bush

Explanation:

The **American Dream** is the idea that Americans can do and become anything they want to through hard work. Children are **brought up** (or raised) to believe that if they work hard enough, they can even become the president of the United States. Almost any American can become president. There are three requirements for becoming president: citizenship, residency, and age. Let's look at them one at a time.

To become president of the United States you must be a U.S. **citizen**, or someone who legally is part of the United States and who can vote here. The only exception is if you are a U.S. citizen who was born **abroad** (or in another country) but whose parents were both U.S. citizens. In this case, you can still become president. Anyone else, such as an immigrant who came to the United States at a very young age, even as a baby, and became a citizen is not **eligible** (or does not meet the requirements) to become president.

The second requirement for becoming president is **residency** (or where a person has lived and for how long). To be president, in addition to being a citizen you must also have lived in the United States for 14 years. This requirement **prevents** (or makes it not possible for) someone who was born in the United States but then spent his or her whole life in another country from becoming president.

Finally, there is an age requirement for becoming president. The president of the United States must be at least 35 years old. So far, the youngest president elected has been John F. Kennedy, who was 43 when he became president. There is no maximum age **limit** (or upper end). So far, the oldest president has been Ronald Reagan, who was 76 years old when his presidency ended.

And those are the only three requirements for being president. There are no restrictions or limitations on whether the president is a man or woman, what skin color the president has, what religion the president follows, or anything else. It's all part of the idea of the great American Dream.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?

American Dream – the idea that Americans can do and become anything they want to through hard work, making a life that is better than what their parents had

* Margot came to the United States because she believed in the American Dream and wanted to work hard to start her own business and buy her own home.

to bring up (a person) – to raise a child; to help a child grow up and become an adult

* Tammy was brought up in Southern Utah.

citizen – a person who is part of a country; a person who belongs to a country

* Mugabe was born in Uganda, but his mother was an American, so he is a citizen of both countries.

abroad – overseas; in another country

* Did you study abroad while you were in college?

eligible – meeting the requirements to do something; allowed to do something because one meets all of the requirements

* Students have to do really well in school to be eligible for those scholarships.

residency – where a person has lived and for how long

* College is cheaper if you have residency in the state where you are studying.

to prevent – to make something impossible; to make something else not be able to happen

* The law tries to prevent people from buying alcohol if they are less than 21 years old.

limit – the lower or upper end of a range; the minimum or maximum amount of something

* The speed limit on this road is 40 miles per hour.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?

Answer:

- Richard Cheney
- Dick Cheney
- Cheney

Explanation:

While the president of the United States has an exciting and important job running the country, the vice president does not have as big a **role** (or job) in the U.S. government. According to the U.S. Constitution, the vice president does only two things. First, if the president is unable to continue working as president, the vice president becomes the new president. Second, the vice president is the president of the Senate (or lawmaking part of government) and can vote to **break ties** (or decide which side wins when each side has an equal number of votes). In addition to these two main jobs, the vice president has some other **duties** (or responsibilities) that the president can give to him or her.

Normally the vice president is elected (or chosen by the people) with the president during the normal presidential elections. But this is something interesting: Two men have been vice presidents without ever being elected – and one of them even became president without ever being elected!

How did this happen? In 1968, Richard Nixon was elected president of the United States and Spiro Agnew was elected his vice president. However, there were many scandals during their **administration** (or the period of time he was president of the United States). A **scandal** is something that happens where a famous person behaves badly and people become very angry about it. Because of these scandals, Spiro Agnew **resigned** (or decided to stop working) as vice president in 1973. When that happened, Gerald Ford was **nominated** to become the new vice president, meaning that President Richard Nixon wanted Gerald Ford to be his new vice president and the Senate approved the nomination (or said it was okay). He was not elected, but given the job by the president and the Senate.

Just one year later, in 1974, the scandals had become worse and President Richard Nixon resigned. When that happened, Vice President Gerald Ford became the new president. But he had never been elected by the voters! This was the first and only time that the United States had a president who was not elected by the voters.

And, after Gerald Ford became president, the vice presidency was **vacant** (or empty), so he nominated Nelson Rockefeller to become the new vice president. This was the second and last time that the United States had a vice president who wasn't elected by the voters.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?

role – a job; a position; a function

* As a marketing professional, her role is to find new customers for the company's products.

to break a tie – to vote only when an equal number of people vote for or against something, so that one's vote decides the result

* Half of the students voted to read this book and the other half voted to read that book, so the teacher had to vote to break the tie.

duty – responsibility; something that someone must do

* The Finance Officer's main duty is to manage the company's investments.

administration – the period of time when one person is serving or working as president

* What were the biggest changes during the last president's administration?

scandal – something that happens where a famous person behaves badly and normal people become angry about it

* The Senator created a big scandal when he accepted major gifts from oil companies.

to resign – to chose to leave a job; to choose to leave a public position before one has finished the normal period of time

* When employees started complaining about how their manager was treating them, he decided to resign instead of defend himself.

to nominate (someone) – to say that one wants someone to work in a particular position or to have a particular title, prize, or award

* How many people were nominated for the writing award?

vacant – empty; without anyone working in a particular position or job

* That position has been vacant for more than two months, because they can't find anyone who has the right experience for the job.



Introduction to the United States
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30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

Answer:

The Vice President

Explanation:

“The President has been shot!” This phrase, or something similar, has been said many times in U.S. history. Being president is a **risky** job (or a job with many dangers). Many presidents are **assassinated** (or killed) or simply die while they are **in office** (or working as president). That’s why we have to have a plan for who will be the next president if the current president dies. When the president can no longer **serve** (or work), the vice president becomes the next president.

To date (or until now), nine vice presidents have become president when the president could no longer serve. The first time this happened was in 1841, when President William Henry Harrison died. The vice president, John Tyler, had a **swearing-in ceremony** and took the presidential **oath of office**, or made a statement promising to do his best while serving as the next president of the United States. Because the order of **succession** (or the plan for who will become the next president) was clear, there were no problems. There was a very easy transition of power (or change from one president to another) and everyone treated President Tyler as a regular president, just as they would have treated President Harrison if he had not died in office.

The president doesn’t necessarily have to die for the vice president to become president through succession. For example, if the president is **impeached** (or if the presidency is taken away from him or her because he or she has done something wrong), the vice president will become president. Also, if the president **resigns**, or decides to stop being president, the vice president will become the new president. This happened when President Richard Nixon resigned and his vice president Gerald Ford was sworn in as the new president.

The Constitution has a long line of succession, or a plan for who will become the next president if the current president dies. For example, if the vice president becomes president but then dies, the next president will be whoever is the Speaker of the House of Representatives. If that person dies, then the next president will be the President Pro Temp of the Senate, and so on.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

risky – with many dangers; with a possibility for failure; dangerous

* Jumping out of airplanes with a parachute is a risky thing to do.

to assassinate – to kill a politician or another important person

* Who assassinated President Lincoln?

in office – while working in a public position

* What do you want to accomplish while you are in office?

to serve – to work in a public position; to work in a government job

* How long do people serve in the U.S. Army?

to date – until now; until the present; before today

* To date, we have received no complaints about our new policies.

swearing-in ceremony – a public event where a person states that he or she will do certain things, and then officially becomes the person in a public position

* People from many countries will come to the swearing-in ceremony for the next president of the United States.

oath of office – a statement promising to do one's best while serving in a public position

* Does the Attorney General have to take an oath of office?

succession – the plan for who will become the next person to work in a particular job when the current person can no longer do the job

* The company has had the same president for more than 30 years, but it needs to have a succession plan for when he can no longer work.

to impeach – to take away the presidency or another public job from a person because he or she has done something wrong

* Can a U.S. president be impeached for lying to the American people?

to resign – to chose to leave a job; to choose to leave a public position before one has finished the normal period of time

* Carolina resigned from her job because she decided she wanted to spend more time at home with her children.



Introduction to the United States
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31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

Answer:

The Speaker of the House

Explanation:

“What would happen if the president died?” Many people enjoy thinking about these **what-if scenarios**, where they try to think about what might happen if certain other things happen. If the president dies, the vice president becomes the new president. But what if the vice president dies? Then the Speaker of the House of Representatives becomes president. But what if his or her replacement dies? And his or her replacement? You get the idea.

The U.S. government needs leadership, so it is important to have a plan for **succession** (or a plan for who will become the next president if something is wrong with the current president). The Presidential Succession **Act** (or law) lists 15 people who will become president if the current president and his or her successors (or the people who come after that person) are not able to **serve** (or work in a public position) as president.

But then the question becomes: What happens if all 15 people die and are unable to serve as president? Actually, there is no answer to that question. U.S. law lists only these 15 positions. If they all die at the same time, then there wouldn't be a clear president of the country. But instead of **extending** the list (or making it longer), our government tries to **avoid** (or not let happen) the possibility of all 15 people dying at once.

How does the government do this? The government never lets the president and all of his or her successors be in the same place at the same time. For example, once a year the president makes a **State of the Union Address**, which is a long speech about how well the country is doing that year. Almost all of the important members of the government go to hear the State of the Union, but one of the people who is on the succession list is always kept away from the rest of the people that day. He or she has to go to another **hidden** (or secret) place while the president is speaking. That way, if the building is attacked during the State of the Union, there will still be one person alive who is on the succession list, and he or she can become president.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

what-if scenario – an imaginary description of what might happen if certain other things happen

* Have you thought out all of the what-if scenarios of what would happen to your family if you died unexpectedly?

succession – the plan for who will become the next person to work in a particular job when the current person can no longer do the job

* In a country ruled by a king, succession is easy because the oldest son becomes the next king.

Act – a written law

* The Clean Air Act is supposed to keep America's air clean and safe for breathing.

to serve – to work in a public position; to work in a government job

* Who is currently serving as the governor of Nebraska?

to extend – to make something longer; to make something bigger

* They want to extend their Internet services across the country.

to avoid – to do something so that something else does not happen; to find a way to prevent something from happening

* We wanted to avoid the storms on our drive across country and decided to take a different route.

State of the Union Address – a long speech made by the U.S president every year about how well the country is doing that year

* Do you think the president will talk about healthcare in this year's State of the Union Address?

hidden – secret; not known to other people

* This old church has a hidden hallway to the building next door.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?

Answer:

The President

Explanation:

About 1.5 million Americans are **on active duty** (or working) in the **military**, which is the organizations and people who fight to protect a country. Who is the leader of all these organizations and people? It is the president of the United States, who is also known as the **Commander-in-Chief**, or the top leader of the military.

The U.S. military is sometimes called the U.S. Armed Forces. It has five main parts: the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. The Army mostly fights on land while the Navy and the Marines fight with boats and the Air Force fights mostly with planes. Finally, the Coast Guard is more involved in protecting America's **coastline**, which is the part of land next to the ocean. These five parts work together to protect the United States, but they need strong leaders to be able to work together effectively or well.

Each of the five parts of the U.S. Armed Forces has many commanders and other leaders, but the president as Commander-in-Chief **outranks** (or has more power than) any of them. As Commander-in-Chief, the president can tell the Armed Forces where to go and when. The president can even lead the Armed Forces on the **battlefield**, or where the fighting actually takes place. However, presidents rarely do that because they know that the leaders of the Armed Forces have more military experience and knowledge than they do. In fact, only two presidents have ever used their power as Commander-in-Chief to actually lead **soldiers** (or the people who fight in a war) onto the battlefield. These were presidents George Washington and James Madison.

Some people think that the Commander-in-Chief has too much power to make and fight wars. Especially with America's recent war on **terror** (or fear caused by another group of people through violence), many people would like to limit the types of things that the president can do when fighting against terrorists.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?

on active duty – working in the police or military

* The police officer is on active duty every weekday evening.

military – the people and organizations who fight for a country, usually to protect it

* How many guns does the U.S. military own?

commander-in-chief – the person who leads a country's military (in the United States, this is the president)

* The Commander-in-Chief makes the most important decisions during a war.

coastline – the part of land next to the ocean

* The United States has two coastlines: one along the Pacific Ocean and another along the Atlantic Ocean.

to outrank (someone) – to have more power than another person in the same organization; to have a higher position than another person in the same organization

* In our army, a commander outranks a sergeant.

battlefield – a place where the fighting actually happens, especially in a war

* Have you ever visited the battlefield at Gettysburg in Pennsylvania?

soldier – a person who fights in the military; a person who fights in a war

* The soldiers had to carry heavy backpacks and guns as they walked through the jungle.

terror – fear caused by another group of people because of violence or the possibility of violence

* The rebels created terror in the city by bombing apartment buildings and shopping centers.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

33. Who signs bills to become laws?

Answer:

The President

Explanation:

Congress is the legislative or lawmaking part of the U.S. government. Congress spends a lot of time debating or talking about different **bills** (or ideas for new laws). Sometimes the members of Congress can't agree on the details of a bill and it never becomes a law. But even when the members of Congress do agree on all the details of the bills, they still haven't become law. Most bills need the president's **signature** (or written name placed on the bill to show that it is approved) to become law.

Once Congress votes to make a bill become a law, the bill is sent to the president. The president then has four choices. First, the president can sign the bill to make it become a law. The president does this when he or she thinks that it is a very good idea and wants to show this to the American people.

The president's second option or choice is to just let the bill sit on his desk without doing anything to it. Once 10 days **pass** (or go by), the bill automatically, without anyone doing anything, becomes a law even without the president's signature. The president might do this when he or she doesn't think that the bill is a great idea, but doesn't want to create a lot of trouble either. In other words, the bill is something that is not very important to the president.

The third option that the president has is to **veto** the bill. By vetoing a bill, the president returns the bill to Congress, **indicating** (or showing) that the bill is a bad idea that should not become a law. This shows a big difference between Congress and the president, because the president is disagreeing with more than half of the members of Congress who had voted for the bill. Congress can decide to vote again, and if more than two-thirds (or 67%) of the members agree, they can **override** the president's veto, making the bill become a law anyway.

Finally, the president's fourth option when he receives a bill is a **pocket veto**. This happens when Congress passes a bill very late in its **session** (or the period of time when Congress meets). The president always has 10 days to **act on** (or respond to) bills, but it is possible that Congress's session ends before those 10 days have passed. In this situation, if the president does not sign the bill, it does not automatically become a law, but instead is automatically vetoed through a pocket veto.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

33. Who signs bills to become laws?

bill – a proposal or an idea for a new law

* Would you support a bill that changed the laws on immigration?

signature – a person's name written down in a unique style, showing that a person agrees with a document or approves of it

* You forgot to put your signature on the check before you mailed it.

to pass – to go by in time

* More than two months have passed since I sent in my application and I still haven't received a response!

to veto – to vote against something; to reject something, especially so that it cannot become a law

* Everyone is hoping that the president will veto the unpopular law that Congress is trying to make.

to indicate – to show something; to make something clear

* He pointed with his finger to indicate which way we should go.

to override – to change another person's or organization's decision by using one's power or authority

* The children wanted to have pizza and ice cream for dinner, but their mother overrode that idea.

pocket veto – the way that a bill is vetoed when the president does not sign the bill and Congress's meetings end less than 10 days after the bill is presented to him or her

* Mr. President, if you don't sign the bill by Friday, Congress will go into vacation and you'll have made a pocket veto

session – period of time when Congress meets; a period of time when a committee meets

* How long will Congress's session be this year?

to act on (something) – to respond; to do something as a result of something else that happens

* Did you read about the new tax credit for homebuyers? We need to act on it by the end of the year to get the money.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

34. Who vetoes bills?

Answer:

The President

Explanation:

Congress is the part of the U.S. government that is responsible for making laws. However, it cannot do it without the president's help. Every time that the members of Congress agree on a **bill** (or an idea for a law), it has to be sent to the president for his or her approval. If the president does not think that the bill is a good idea, he or she can **veto** the bill so that it doesn't become a law. If Congress still wants that bill to become a law, it can vote again and if two-thirds (or 67%) of the members agree, they can **override** the president's veto so that the bill becomes a law even though the president doesn't like it.

But what happens when the president thinks that some parts of the bill are good but other parts are bad? U.S. bills can be very long, complex documents that have hundreds or thousands of pages and **cover** (or talk about) many different things. Can the president veto just one or a few things in a bill, but still have the rest of the bill become law?

That question was being asked a lot in the mid-1990s. Many members of Congress wanted the president to have **line-item** veto power, or the ability to veto just single line items, or small parts, of a larger bill. In 1996, Congress passed a bill called the Line Item Veto Act of 1996. President Bill Clinton signed it and it became a law. With this law, the president could veto individual parts of **appropriation** bills, or bills about how the government should spend its money. President Clinton used this power a few times.

However, the members of Congress who didn't like this law thought that it was **unconstitutional**, or went against the United States' most important legal document, the Constitution. The issue was presented to the Supreme Court, the most powerful court in the US., which decided that the line-item veto was unconstitutional. The Supreme Court believed that the way the Constitution is written, the president must approve or veto whole bills and not just parts of them. So in 1998 the Line Item Veto Act was **repealed** (or taken away so that it was not a law anymore). President Clinton was the only president who was ever able to make a line-item veto.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

34. Who vetoes bills?

bill – a proposal or an idea for a new law

* The senator wants to write a bill that would punish factories that don't treat their workers well.

to veto – to vote against something; to reject something, especially so that it cannot become a law

* Why did you veto the new law? More than 70% of the people who voted for you supported it, so they expected you to support it, too.

to override – to change another person's or organization's decision by using one's power or authority

* The workers wrote a letter saying that they wanted more vacation time, but their manager overrode their proposal and said they needed to work harder.

to cover – to talk about; to discuss or describe a certain topic

* This book covers the early life and career of Rachel Carson.

line item – a single line or part of a proposal, bill, or budget

* Why does your department's budget have a line item for massages?

appropriations – related to how the government decides how it will spend its money

* Teachers from all over the country are trying to get Congress to have bigger appropriations for education.

unconstitutional – against the Constitution; against the law

* In the United States, it is unconstitutional to tell people what religion they must follow.

to repeal – to take back; to undo something, especially a law that was already made

* The city repealed an unpopular law that didn't let stores sell alcohol on Saturday evenings.



Introduction to the United States
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35. What does the President's Cabinet do?

Answer:

Advises the President

Explanation:

Being the president of the United States is a big job and our Founding Fathers (or the people who created the U.S. government) knew that one person couldn't do everything alone. That's why the president has the U.S. Cabinet, usually just called the Cabinet. The **Cabinet** is a group of people who **advise** (or give advice, information, and ideas) to the president on many important issues. The president can use their advice to make decisions while leading the country. Because of this, Cabinet members have very important and powerful roles (or jobs) in U.S. government since they can influence the president's decisions.

Under our first president, George Washington, the Cabinet was very small and it had only four members. Since then, the Cabinet has grown a lot. Today the Cabinet has 15 people, who are referred to as **secretaries**, such as the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of Agriculture. The most recent addition to the Cabinet in 2006 is the Secretary of Homeland Security, whose job it is to keep Americans safe. The Constitution (or the country's most important legal document) does not say how large the Cabinet should be, so Congress can add or remove members as the country's needs change.

Cabinet members are **appointed** to their positions. This means that they are first **nominated** by the president (or the president gives the members' name to Congress) and then they must be **confirmed** (or approved) or rejected by the Senate. Almost anyone can become a Cabinet member. The only restriction or limitation is that Cabinet members are not allowed to be Senators, Representatives, or governors **simultaneously** (or at the same time) while they are serving (or working) in the Cabinet.

The Cabinet members are in the **line of succession** (or the plan for who will become president if something happens to him or her). After the president come the vice-president, the speaker of the House, and the president of the Senate, and then the secretary of state and other members of the Cabinet, in the order of their **ranking** (or importance).



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

35. What does the President's Cabinet do?

cabinet – a group of people who give advice, information, and ideas to the U.S. president on many important issues

* Being a cabinet member and having the president ask you for advice would be very exciting.

to advise – to give advice, information, and ideas about how another person should do something or think about something

* The career counselor advises students on how to pick a college.

secretary – one of the 15 people in the Cabinet

* The U.S. Secretary of the Interior is responsible for the National Park Service.

appointed – chosen for and given a position by someone with a lot of power

* Has a new judge been appointed yet?

to nominate – to say that one wants someone to work in a particular position or to have a particular title, prize, or award

* Who did you nominate for our team's "most valuable player" award?

to confirm – to approve a nomination; to give a position, job, or award to someone who has been nominated for it

* How many of the president's nominees were confirmed by Congress?

simultaneously – at the same time

* I don't know how you can study, listen to music, talk on the phone, and watch TV simultaneously.

line of succession – the plan for who will become the next person to work in a particular job when the current person can no longer do the job

* What would happen if everyone in the U.S. presidential line of succession died at the same time?

ranking – importance; one's place in a list, usually from best to worst, most to least, and so on

* The the surprise of everyone, the athlete with the highest ranking didn't win the competition.



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36. What are two Cabinet-level positions?

Answer:

- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Commerce
- Secretary of Defense
- Secretary of Education
- Secretary of Energy
- Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Secretary of Homeland Security
- Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- Secretary of Interior
- Secretary of State
- Secretary of Transportation
- Secretary of Treasury
- Secretary of Veterans' Affairs
- Secretary of Labor
- Attorney General

Explanation:

The U.S. **Cabinet** (or the group of people who advise the president, giving him or her ideas, advice, and information) has grown a lot over time. Under our first president, George Washington, the Cabinet had only four members: the Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of War, and Attorney General. Today, the Cabinet has 15 members. However, not all 15 are equally important. Some have much more power than others.

The four most important Cabinet members are the same ones that George Washington had, although their **titles** (or the names of their jobs) have changed a little bit. These four most important members are known as the “Big Four” and are the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Defense, and the Attorney General.

The Secretary of State is responsible for **foreign affairs** (or relationships between the United States and other countries). The Secretary of State **negotiates** (or discusses) international agreements and gives instructions to U.S. **ambassadors** (or official representatives of the United States in other countries).

The Secretary of the Treasury mostly works with finance, economics, and money. He or she recommends what the president should do to keep the U.S. economy strong. The Secretary's signature is on all of the United States' **monetary bills** (or paper money).

The Secretary of Defense, who used to be known as the Secretary of War, works with the **military** (or the people and organizations who fight to protect the United States).



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Finally, the last member of the Big Four, the Attorney General, serves as the United States' most important lawyer, making sure that laws are **enforced** (or applied). When the United States needs to be represented in-person in court, the Attorney General is responsible for stating the government's position. The Attorney General is the only member of the U.S. Cabinet who does not have the title of "secretary."

Glossary

36. What are two Cabinet-level positions?

cabinet – a group of people who give advice, information, and ideas to the U.S. president on many important issues

* How many people are in the U.S. Cabinet?

title – the name of one's job; the way that a person is referred to

* Her title is "regional sales manager."

foreign affairs – things that happen between two or more countries

* Rita is studying foreign affairs because she likes to know about the agreements between countries.

to negotiate – to discuss something, trying to get the other person or organization to agree to what one wants

* Do you think those countries will ever be able to negotiate a peace agreement?

ambassador – an official representatives of a country in another country

* The United States has an ambassador in almost every country in the world.

monetary bill – a piece of paper money; money that is printed on paper

* Have you ever seen the United States' \$2 monetary bill?

military – the people and organizations who fight for a country, usually to protect it

* The military spends a lot of money on technology and weapons.

to enforce (something) – to make people follow a law or rule; to make sure that a rule or law is applied

* The speed limit on this street is 15 miles per hour, but the police don't enforce it and many people drive 30 or 40 miles per hour here.



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37. What does the judicial branch do?

Answer:

- Reviews laws
- Explains laws
- Resolves disputes (disagreements)
- Decides if a law goes against the Constitution

Explanation:

The U.S. government has three branches (or parts): the executive branch which makes sure that people follow laws, the legislative branch which makes new laws, and the **judicial branch** which **interprets** laws (or decides what the laws mean and how they should be applied). Normally the executive and legislative branches can work together without any trouble. The legislative branch makes new laws and the executive branch enforces them. However, sometimes people don't agree on what the laws mean. They think the laws are unclear or **unconstitutional** (or not in agreement with the U.S. Constitution). When that happens, someone needs to be able to say what the law really means and that is exactly what the judicial branch does.

The judicial branch **comprises** (or is made up of) many courts. A **court** is a place where legal decisions are made, especially about whether or not someone has broken a law or what that law really means in the first place. When the Constitution created the judicial branch, it created the Supreme Court, which is the highest and most important court in the country. Since then, Congress has created many **lower courts** (or less powerful courts) that **hear cases** (or decide on legal issues) in many special areas. These lower courts include the tax courts, which decide whether or not people and businesses are **evading** (or not paying) taxes, and the bankruptcy courts, which decide whether people and businesses can **declare bankruptcy** (or not pay back the money they owe to other people and organizations because they don't have any money left). The judicial branch needs to have many different courts because there are too many cases to send all of them to the Supreme Court.

The Department of Justice is a very large part of the U.S. government that tries to get **justice** (or fairness in the law) for all Americans. The Department also tries to prevent and control crime (or things like murders (killings) and theft) to make the United States safer. The Department of Justice is not part of the judicial branch, however. It is part of the executive branch of the national government.



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Glossary

37. What does the judicial branch do?

judicial branch – the court system; the part of the U.S. government that decides what the laws mean and determines whether people have done something against the law

* The Supreme Court is part of the judicial branch of the U.S. government.

to interpret – to determine or decide what something means

* Readers have interpreted his poems in many different ways.

unconstitutional – against the Constitution; against the law

* It would be unconstitutional for the U.S. president to make laws alone, without involving Congress.

to comprise – to be made up of; to consist of

* The band comprises a singer, a piano player, and a drummer.

court – a place where legal decisions are made, especially about whether or not something has broken a law, or what that law really means

* The court was filled with people who wanted to hear the judge's decision.

lower court – a court that is less powerful than another court

* Difficult legal questions have to be discussed in the lower courts before they can be discussed in the Supreme Court.

to hear a case – to decide on a legal issue; to hear what both parties have to say about a legal issue and then make a decision about which party is correct

* Today, the judge will hear a case between a person who bought a poor-quality car and the company that made it.

to evade (something) – to avoid something; to find a way to not do something

* Stop evading the question and just tell us the truth!

to declare bankruptcy – to get legal permission to not pay back the money that one owes to other people and organizations because one doesn't have any money left

* They lost their car, home, jewelry, business, and almost everything else before they declared bankruptcy.

justice – fairness in the law; being fair and reasonable

* People were angry that there wasn't more justice when the murderer was in jail for only two years.



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38. What is the highest court in the United States?

Answer:

The Supreme Court

Explanation:

Everybody makes mistakes, but what happens if it is a **judge** (or a person who makes legal decisions in a court)? Imagine that you are in a **lawsuit** (or a problem or argument that has to be talked about in court) and the judge rules (or decides) against you, but you still think that you are right. Your next step is an **appeal**, which is an official document asking a higher, more important court to rule on your lawsuit. And if that appeal fails (or doesn't work), you might make another appeal to an even higher court. Eventually, however, there are no higher courts because you have arrived at the **Supreme Court**, which is often called "the highest (or most important) court in the United States."

The Supreme Court doesn't agree to rule on all **cases** (or lawsuits). The Supreme Court receives more than 7,000 **petitions** (or requests to rule on a case) each year, but it accepts fewer than 100 of them. That is because the Supreme Court has limited time and people to do the work, and it wants to use them to rule on only the most important cases. In particular, it wants to rule on cases that are related to how federal laws are interpreted (or understood), especially when they are related to the U.S. Constitution (or the country's most important legal document).

The Supreme Court's cases are very **far-reaching**, meaning that they have a lot of influence in American culture and law. Some of their cases are well known to most Americans. For example, one famous case known as Brown v. Board of Education made it illegal to have separate schools for white students and black students. Another famous case known as Roe v. Wade made **abortions** (the practice of ending a pregnancy so the baby is never born) legal.

The Supreme Court meets in the Supreme Court Building in the center of Washington, DC. The building is sometimes called the "**Temple** of Justice" where a temple is a holy place that people build for their gods.



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Glossary

38. What is the highest court in the United States?

judge – a person whose job is to manage a trial and courtroom and decide whether a person should be punished for breaking the law

* She has worked as a lawyer for years, but she dreams of becoming a judge.

lawsuit – a case; a problem or argument that has to be talked about and a decision made in court

* Rick started a lawsuit against his employer when he lost his job for no reason.

appeal – an official request or document asking a higher, more important court to rule on one's lawsuit

* The judge said that Jess should pay \$100,000 for what he did, but he's filing an appeal, because he doesn't think he should have to pay anything.

Supreme Court – the highest, most powerful court in the United States

* Did you hear about the Supreme Court's decision that will change the gun laws in the United States?

case – a lawsuit; a problem or argument that has to be talked about in court

* As a criminal lawyer, Janet's has handled many cases involving thieves.

petition – a request to rule on a case; a request to hear a lawsuit and make a legal decision on it

* The judge laughed when he received a petition from a child who thought it should be illegal for his parents to ask him to clean his room.

far-reaching – having a lot of influence or impact; having many consequences; being very important

* His medical research has had far-reaching effects on how doctors treat people with searious diseases.

abortion – the practice of ending a pregnancy so the baby is never born

* Some people believe that abortions should be legal and others do not.

temple – a holy place that people build for their gods

* They go to the temple to worship every Sunday.



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39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?

Answer:

Nine (9)

Explanation:

The Supreme Court, which is the most important court in the United States, has changed in many ways since it was first founded (or created) in 1790. When the Supreme Court first began, there were only six **justices** (or the judges who work on the Supreme Court). This number changed six times, but since 1869 there have always been nine justices.

Supreme Court justices are **appointed** (or given their positions by people who work in politics). First they are **nominated**, which is when the president selects or picks them and says that this is the person who should get the job. Then they are rejected or accepted by the U.S. Senate. Justices are not rejected very often. In fact, only 12 nominees have ever been rejected as Supreme Court justices. All the others have been **confirmed** (or approved when at least half of the Senate members voted for them). The leader of these nine justices is called the Chief Justice; the other eight are called Associate Justices.

When justices are confirmed (or approved), then they are appointed **for life**, meaning that once they become a justice they can never be forced to leave. Also, their **salary** (or the amount of money they make each year) can never be reduced (or made less). Because of this, the justices never have to worry about losing their jobs or losing money if they vote the wrong way or make a decision the president or other people don't like. This is a good thing, because it means that they can **rule** (or make legal decisions) based on their beliefs and not to please the current president.

Because the justices serve (or work in this public job) for life, the Supreme Court has a very low turnover rate. The **turnover rate** is how often old people leave and new people take their place in an organization. Most of the justices serve (or work) for many, many years, often until they die or decide that they want to **retire** (or stop working to enjoy their old age). Since 1790, there have been only 16 Chief Justices and 97 Associate Justices. On average (or typically), they serve 15 years. Because of this, the Supreme Court has a lot of **continuity** (or consistency over time).



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Glossary

39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?

justice – a judge; one of the judges who work on the Supreme Court

* Who was the first female Supreme Court justice?

appointed – chosen for and given a position by someone with a lot of power

* The company president wants to keep the business in his family, so he has appointed his son to have his job when he retires.

to nominate – to say that one wants someone to work in a particular position or to have a particular title, prize, or award

* His dream is to be nominated for the Nobel Prize in physics.

to confirm – to approve a nomination; to give a position, job, or award to someone who has been nominated for it

* Why didn't Congress confirm her nomination for the position?

for life – for the rest of one's life, or possibly until one decides to stop working

* We work in most jobs for only a few years, but being a parent is for life.

salary – the amount of money that a person makes each year

* Most U.S. doctors have a salary of more than \$100,000.

to rule – to make a legal decision; to decide whether something is against the law; to decide how something should be done

* How do you think the court will rule in that case?

turnover rate – how often employees leave and new people take their place in an organization or business

* Very stressful jobs have a high turnover rate because people get tired of working so hard.

to retire – to stop working so that one can enjoy one's old age

* Are you saving enough money to be able to retire comfortably?

continuity – the way that something stays the same over time

* When they moved across the country, they gave their daughter a sense of continuity by making sure that she had all her favorite toys with her.



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40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States?

Answer:

John Roberts (John G. Roberts, Jr.)

Explanation:

The Supreme Court is the highest (or most important) court in the United States, so it makes sense that the leader of the Supreme Court, known as the Chief Justice, is the highest (or most important) judge in the U.S. government.

The Chief Justice has all the same responsibilities as the Associate Justices for **hearing cases** (or listening to lawsuits and stating a legal opinion). However, the Chief Justice also has many other responsibilities.

When the nine justices of the Supreme Court **discuss** (or talk about) cases, the Chief Justice must lead the discussion. The Chief Justice speaks first, and this gives him or her the power to **influence** (or affect) the discussion. The Chief Justice also makes the **agenda** (or plan for what will be discussed) for each weekly meeting where the justices decide which cases they are going to hear.

When the justices vote on a case, the Chief Justice's vote is equal to (or has the same importance as) the other eight votes. However, the Chief Justice gets to decide who will write the court's **opinion** (or a written document explaining what the court decided and why). Because the Chief Justice knows each justice's writing style and opinions, he or she can pick the one who will write an opinion that describes the case as he or she would want it to be described. That is an important way for the Chief Justice to influence the work of the Supreme Court, since lawyers and other judges often go back to read the Supreme Court's opinions and use them to make other legal decisions later.

When the U.S. president is **inaugurated** (or first begins working as the president), the Chief Justice states the **oath** (or promises that are made before entering a public office) that the new president must repeat.

The Chief Justice also must **preside over** (or lead) impeachment trials for the U.S. president. An **impeachment trial** happens when the members of Congress believe that the president is doing his or her job very poorly or has done something very wrong and want to vote to have the job of president taken away from him or her.



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Glossary

40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States?

to hear a case – to decide on a legal issue; to hear what both parties have to say about a legal issue and then make a decision about which party is correct

* It must be very sad and depressing for judges to hear divorce cases all day.

to discuss (something) – to talk about something; to have a conversation about something

* In tomorrow's lecture, we'll discuss the topics in the first part of chapter 13 from your textbook.

to influence (something) – to affect something; to change something, especially how people think or act

* Darwin's theory of evolution influenced the way we thought about what it means to be human.

agenda – a plan for what will be discussed at a meeting; a person's plan for what he or she wants to get done while working in a public job

* Today's agenda includes a 10-minute presentation by Ms. Jenkins.

opinion – a written document explaining what a court (especially the Supreme Court) decided and why

* The law students have to read and summarize two court opinions by Thursday.

to inaugurate (someone) – to have an official ceremony when a person first begins working in a public position or job

* President Jackson was inaugurated in 1829.

oath – the promises that one makes orally (spoken) when beginning to work in a public position or job

* All of the police officers have to take an oath, promising to protect the people who live in the city.

to preside over (something) – to lead something; to be responsible for something; to be in charge of something

* The minister will preside over Tom and Shanda's wedding ceremony.

impeachment trial – a series of meetings where Congress decides whether the U.S. president is doing his or her job so badly that the presidency should be taken away from him or her

* Do you think the president should resign before his impeachment trial begins?



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41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?

Answer:

- To print money
- To declare war
- To create an army
- To make treaties

Explanation:

When the 13 original states united (or came together) to make a new country, each of the states wanted to keep its powers and **independence** (or ability to make its own decisions). But the new federal (or national) government would also need some powers or else the states would not be able to work together as a new country. That is why the Constitution (our country's most important legal document) **specifies** (or makes clear) certain powers for the federal government and others for the states.

One of the powers of the federal government is to **print money** or to make the **bills** (or paper money) and **coins** (or metal money) that we use to buy and sell things. It makes sense that this is a federal power, because if each state could print its own money, then it would be very difficult to buy and sell things across state **borders** (or the lines drawn between states on a map, where one state ends and another state begins). When only the federal government can print money, all the states use the same type of **currency** (or the type of money used in a country).

Another power of the federal government is to **declare war** (or to say that a war is beginning). Obviously this power should exist only at the national level, because it doesn't make sense for one or two states to declare war against another country. Wars should happen only between countries.

A third power of the federal government is to create an **army** (or the large group of people and organizations that fight to protect a country). States can have police that work within the state, but not armies that work internationally or in other countries.

Finally, the federal government can make **treaties** (or official agreements between countries). For example, the United States is involved in NATO, spelled "N," "A," "T," "O," which stands for the North Atlantic Treaty Organizations, at the national level. Individual states do not need to participate in NATO because the entire country participates in it at the federal level.



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Glossary

41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?

independence – freedom; the ability of a country or area to make its own decisions, especially about its government

* After our country got its independence, it took many years to establish a stable government.

to specify (something) – to make something clear, specific, and detailed

* Could you please specify the reasons why you think this project is a bad idea?

to print money – to make paper money and/or coins for use in a country

* If the government prints too much money, we'll have inflation and prices will go up.

bill – a piece of paper money; money that is printed on paper

* May I take a \$20 bill out of your wallet for you?

coin – a piece of money made from metal; a small, round piece of metal that is used as money

* I only have two five-cent coins, but I need a 25-cent coin for the parking meter.

border – a line drawn between two countries, states, counties, or similar areas on a map, where one area ends and another area begins

* What river is on the border between Oregon and Washington?

currency – the type of money used in a country

* Japan's currency is the yen.

to declare war – to officially say that a war is beginning

* How many times did the United States declare war in the 1800s?

army – the people and organizations who fight for a country, usually to protect it, and usually fighting on the ground (not in the air or on the ocean)

* Elliot wants to join the U.S. army so that he can travel to other countries.

treaty – an international agreement; an agreement between different countries

* Poland signed the Treaty of Torun in 1466.



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42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?

Answer:

- Provide schooling and education
- Provide protection (police)
- Provide safety (fire departments)
- Give a driver's license
- Approve zoning and land use

Explanation:

Sometimes people who come to the United States from other countries are surprised by the differences among individual states. Things that are legal (or allowed by law) in one state may not be legal in another! Many of the things that are **determined** (or decided) at a national level in other countries are determined at the state level in the United States. Let's take a look at some of the powers that states have.

First, states have the power to provide schooling and education. The United States does not have a national educational system. Each state can **establish** (or create) its own requirements. This means that a student in a school in one state may study different things from a student in another state even though those two students are the same age and in the same grade. That is why high schools in some states require that their students study foreign languages or complete three years of math, while high schools in other states don't have those requirements.

States also have the power to provide protection for the people who live there, and they do this by having state **police forces** (or groups of people and organizations that protect ordinary people). The **federal** (or national) government has an army for fighting internationally, but the states have the police to take care of problems within the state. Individual cities can have police forces, too.

Each of the fifty states are also responsible for providing safety for the people who live there. They do this by having firefighters who can **put out** (or end) fires when they get out of control.

Driver's licenses (or permission to drive a car) are under the **domain** (or responsibility) of the states. Each state can decide who is allowed to get a driver's license, and those driver's licenses look different in each state. There is no national driver's license in the United States.

Finally, individual states have the power to approve **zoning** and land use, or the rules for what kinds of things the land can be used for, such as for housing, business, or parks. The federal government cannot tell the states how to use their own land unless there is federal land within a state.



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Glossary

42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?

to determine – to decide; to identify

* The education department determined that students would do better if they were in smaller classes.

to establish – to create; to start; to form

* The university was established in 1924.

police force – a group of people and organizations that protect ordinary people from crime

* In general, people in our state feel safer in the cities with large police forces.

federal – national; related to the entire country

* Most of the United States' most important federal buildings are in Washington, DC.

to put out – to end something, especially a fire

* Ingot put out the kitchen fire by pouring water on the stove.

driver's license – a card that gives one permission to drive a car, usually with one's picture on it

* Most Americans can get a driver's license when they are 16 years old.

domain – responsibility; the area where someone or something is in control

* Do you think that cooking and laundry are only a woman's domain?

zoning – land use; the way that land may be used for specific purposes

* According to the new zoning laws, this is an industrial district.



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43. Who is the Governor of your state?

Answer:

Answers will vary. [Residents of the District of Columbia and U.S. territories without a Governor should say “we don’t have a Governor.”]

Explanation:

States are **vested with** (or are given) many powers and responsibilities, so they need to have strong **leadership** (or direction and management from one person or a small group of people). The leader of each state is called a **governor**. Each state decides how much power its governor has, so some governors have more power than others. However, most governors have many of the same **duties** (or the things that one is expected to do in one’s job).

In many ways, governors lead their states like the U.S. president leads the national government. For example, the way that governors are involved in lawmaking at the state level is similar to the way that the U.S. president is involved in lawmaking at the national level. Governors also appoint (or give political jobs to) many state-level officials, just like the U.S. president appoints many federal officials.

State governors are also responsible for managing the **budget** (or the plan for how the state will spend its money in the future) and they try to **balance the budget** of their state (or make sure that the state does not spend more money than it receives).

Governors have many **ceremonial** duties (or duties related to special days and special gatherings). They often go to important events in the state, speaking to the people who are there. The governor normally works in the state capitol (or the building where most of the state’s government offices are). Many state governments have an official residence (or home for the governor) near the state capitol building.

Governors are elected (or chosen through a vote) by the state’s **residents** (or the people who live in a particular state for a particular period of time). In all but two states, governors serve (or work) for four years at a time. The governors of Vermont and New Hampshire, two states in the Eastern part of the U.S., serve for only two years at a time.



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Glossary

43. Who is the Governor of your state?

to be vested with (something) – to be given something officially; to have something

* The investors are vested with part of the company's profits.

leadership – direction and management from one person or a small group of people; the ability to make other people believe in oneself and follow oneself

* Everyone admired Zane's leadership during the emergency situation.

governor – the political leader of a U.S. state; the head of a state government

* The U.S. President had a meeting with all 50 U.S. governors to talk about economic development.

duty – responsibility; something that someone must do

* The receptionist's duties include answering the phone and greeting people who come into the office.

budget – a plan for how a person, organization, business, or government will spend its money in the future

* Their family budget includes \$350 for groceries and \$100 for clothing each month.

to balance the budget – to make sure that an organization does not spend more money than it receives in a period of time

* I don't think the United States will ever be able to balance the budget.

ceremonial – related to special days, especially holidays, and special gatherings

* The priest put on the ceremonial robe and then began to give the blessing.

resident – a person who lives in a particular state or area

* People from other states have to pay more than Ohio residents do to study at Ohio State University.



Introduction to the United States
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44. What is the capital of your state?

Answer:

Answers will vary. [District of Columbia residents should answer that D.C. is not a state and does not have a capital. Residents of U.S. territories should name the capital of the territory.]

Explanation:

Each of the fifty states has a **capital** (or a city where government buildings are and important decisions are made) for its state government. But what about the federal (or national) government? Where is its capital? Our Founding Fathers knew that if they put the federal capital within one state, that state would have more power and **prestige** (or importance and respect) than all the other states, and that wouldn't be fair. They had to find a way to have a federal capital that would not **favor** (or give advantages to) one state more than all the others.

The first capital of the United States was New York City, but this was just a **temporary** capital, a capital for a short period of time. Our first president, George Washington, had to find a better place for the capital. In 1791 the capital was moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At that time, Philadelphia was the biggest city in the country, so it made sense for the capital to be there. But even this was only temporary and the U.S. government planned to move the capital to a **site** (or place) on the Potomac River.

In 1800, the U.S. capital officially moved to Washington, DC. DC stands for **District** (or area) and Columbia, which refers to Christopher Columbus, who was an explorer (or a person looking for new places and things) and was one of the first people to come to North America from Europe. Washington, DC is the country's capital and a city, but it is not a state. It isn't in a state, either. Washington, DC was made by taking some lands from Maryland and Virginia, two states that **border** (or are next to) Washington, DC today.

When Washington, DC was built, the site was very unpleasant. The capital was built on **swampland** (or very wet earth). The weather was bad and there were many mosquitoes and other insects. But the plan was successful and Washington, DC is still our nation's capital today. The White House, where the president lives, the Capitol Building, where Congress makes laws, and the Supreme Court, where legal decisions are made, are all in Washington, DC, along with many other federal buildings. There are also many businesses, museums, and **monuments** (or things built to remember people and things from the past). Many people live in Washington, DC, but because it is not a state, they do not have any representatives who can vote in Congress, since that is **reserved** (or set aside) for states.



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Glossary

44. What is the capital of your state?

capital – a city where government buildings are and important decisions are made

* The city of Lansing is the capital of Michigan.

prestige – importance and respect

* Medical doctors have a lot of prestige because they are well-paid and their work helps other people.

to favor (someone or something) – to give advantages to someone or something

* Do you favor one of your children more than the others?

temporary – for a short period of time

* We need to find temporary housing when we move to Dallas so that we'll have a few months to look for a home to buy.

site – a place; a location

* That hill is the site of the first school in Wyoming.

district – area; a sub-division of a larger area; a large part or section of a bigger area

* If you live in the Laurelhurst School District, then your children will go to Laurelhurst Elementary School.

to border (something) – to be next to another area

* Nevada borders Utah, Arizona, California, Oregon, and Idaho.

swampland – very wet earth; land with a lot of water in it

* When they went walking through the swampland, they were bitten by a lot of mosquitoes.

monument – a building, statue, or something else that is built to remember an important person or event

* The Washington Monument is supposed to help people remember President George Washington and his achievements.

reserved for (something or someone) – set aside for; arranged for the use of something by a specific person or group of people

* The closest parking space is reserved for the company president.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?

Answer:

Democratic and Republican

Explanation:

More than 300 million people live in the United States and they have many different opinions about how the government should be. If each of them voted **independently** (or alone, not paying attention to what other people are doing), then it would be very difficult to **predict** (or know ahead of time) how our government would be, and no one would be able to have very much power in American government. However, our country has many **political parties** (or organized groups of people who have similar political opinions and try to get power in the government) that people can be **affiliated** with (or connected to as a member).

The two biggest political parties are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. The Democratic Party is more **liberal**, believing that wealth (or money) should be shared among all people and that the government should make laws to help this happen, even if that means having higher taxes (or money paid to the government) so it can give help and services to everyone. The Democratic Party is also **left-leaning** socially, **emphasizing** (or giving importance to) protecting the environment, equal (or the same) rights for all people, and other social issues.

The Republic Party is economically **conservative**, believing that the economy should operate freely with little government intervention (or involvement). The Republican Party favors (or supports) low taxes and less control and influence by the federal (or national) government. The Republicans also emphasize **traditional values**, such as strong families, little immigration, and the right for individuals to own guns.

The Democratic Party is **symbolized** (or represented in a picture or image) by a donkey, which is an animal that is similar to a small, strong horse. The Republican Party is symbolized by an elephant. The parties are also symbolized by colors, with blue for the Democratic Party and red for the Republican Party. For example, a blue state is a state where most people vote for the Democratic Party and a red state is a state where most people vote for the Republican Party. After an important election, newspapers usually print maps of the country with blue and red states to show where each party won.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?

independently – alone, without paying attention to what other people are doing

* Do you prefer working independently or as part of a team?

to predict – to know something ahead of time; to believe that something will happen in the future

* Nobody predicted how much the Internet would change the way that people communicate with each other.

political party – a group of people who have the same political beliefs and belong to the same political organization

* Jessica likes the Democratic political party because it cares about protecting the natural environment.

affiliated with (something) – connected to an organization as a member

* Many people who work in advertising are affiliated with the American Marketing Association.

liberal – believing that wealth (or money) should be shared among all people and that the government should make laws to help this happen, even if that means having higher taxes (or money paid to the government) so that everyone can receive help and services

* Only a very liberal voter would want to increase taxes by 50% to help the homeless.

left-leaning – interested in social issues that liberals care about, like the environment and equal human rights

* Greenpeace is an environmental organization that has a lot of left-leaning members.

to emphasize (something) – to give importance to something; to focus on or highlight something

* Her parents always emphasized the importance of getting a college education.

conservative – believing that the economy should operate freely with little government intervention (or involvement), supporting lower taxes, and less control and influence by the federal (or national) government.

* He's a conservative politician, so he'll probably vote to lower taxes.



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traditional values – things that have historically been very important to people, like strong families, little immigration, and the right to own guns

* Therese believes that many people who go to church every Sunday have traditional values.

symbolized – represented by a picture, image, or something else

* Love is often symbolized by a red rose.



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46. What is the political party of the President now?

Answer:

Republican (Party)

Explanation:

Senators, representatives, and the president of the United States almost all have **political affiliations** (or membership in a political party), but not necessarily the same ones. Sometimes most of the members of Congress have the same political affiliation that the president does. When that happens, making laws is usually easy, because Congress and the president have the same beliefs about what the government should do. Congress makes laws and the president approves them.

At other times, things don't work as smoothly (or easily). Congress has one political affiliation, but the president has another political affiliation. When that happens, it is more difficult to make laws, because Congress and the president do not agree on what the government should do. Congress might pass a law, but when it goes to the president for approval, he or she may not **sign** it (or put his or her name on it to show that it is okay to make it a law).

Whether or not Congress and the President have the same political affiliation can change during an **administration** (or the period of time when one person is serving or working as president). That's because the president is elected every four years, but Congress is elected more often. Members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years. Members of the Senate are elected for six years, but one-third (or 33%) of them are elected every two years, so the political affiliation of the **majority** (or the bigger part, more than 50% of the members) can change every two years.

This means that a president might begin his or her administration or term with a Congress that has a majority (or over 50%) of its members from the same party, but at the end of the administration, the situation might have **reversed** itself (or become the opposite). Presidents try to **take advantage of** (or use the opportunity to get the most or best results) the time when the majority of Congress members have the same political affiliation, because this is when the president can most easily **pursue** (or try to get) his or her **agenda** (or the plan of what a person wants to get done while working in a public job).



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Glossary

46. What is the political party of the President now?

political affiliation – membership in a political party

* Have you ever dated someone with a different political affiliation than your own?

to sign (something) – to write one's name on something, usually to show approval or agreement

* If you agree with everything in the contract, please sign your name here.

administration – the period of time when one person is serving or working as president

* What was the most important accomplishment of President Monroe's administration?

majority – the bigger part of something; more than 50% of something

* The majority of American adults in this part of the country own a car.

to reverse – to become the opposite of what something was

* The government has reversed its policy on pollution and now is helping companies be more environmentally-friendly.

to take advantage of (something) – to use an opportunity to get the most or best of something

* Dinah took advantage of a national scholarship program to pay for graduate school.

to pursue (something) – to work hard to get something, especially if it is difficult or requires a lot of time

* Why did you decide to pursue a degree in civil engineering?

agenda – a plan for what will be discussed at a meeting; a person's plan for what he or she wants to get done while working in a public job

* He has a detailed agenda for what he wants to do as the city's mayor.



Introduction to the United States
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47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

Answer:

(Nancy) Pelosi

Explanation:

There are 435 members in the House of Representatives. Can you imagine trying to make laws or to get any work done without a clear leader who can **guide** (or lead) all those people? The person who does this is called the Speaker of the House of Representatives, which is a very important position in U.S. government. The Speaker of the House not only leads the House of Representatives, but also is in the presidential **line of succession** (or the plan for who will become president if something happens to the president). If the president can no longer be president, then his or her replacement would be the vice president, but if he or she cannot be president either, then the Speaker of the House becomes president.

The Speaker of the House is a member of the House of Representatives. The 435 members of the House vote to decide who will be the Speaker. Usually the Speaker is a member of the **majority party** (or the political party that most representatives are a member of), but not always. The Speaker is elected (or chosen) on the first day of a new Congressional **session** (or the period of time when the Congress is meeting) for a two-year **term**, which is the amount of time that someone works in a public position. During those two years, the Speaker has all the same **duties** (or responsibilities) as a regular representative, discussing and voting on issues. But he or she also has some special duties.

The Speaker of the House has control of the calendar that shows when **bills** (or ideas for laws) will be discussed and voted on. The Speaker can use this power to make sure that his or her favorite bills are discussed and passed before other bills can be discussed and passed.

The Speaker of the House also serves (or works in a public job) as the **presiding officer** when the House of Representatives meets. The Speaker of the House **calls on** other members of the House, giving them permission to speak when bills are being discussed. Nobody can speak unless the Speaker has given permission (or said that it is okay to speak).



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Glossary

47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

to guide (someone) – to lead someone; to show someone what to do or how to do something

* Without your help to guide us out of the forest, we would still be lost.

line of succession – the plan for who will become the next person to work in a particular job when the current person can no longer do the job

* Our company has a clear line of succession for when our president leaves.

majority party – the political party that most members of the House of Representatives and the Senate belong to

* When was the last time we had a different majority party than the one in power now?

session – period of time when Congress meets; a period of time when a committee meets

* How many bills does Congress discuss in a typical session?

term – the length of time that a person has a job

* He was just elected to be the secretary in the student government for a one-year term.

duty – responsibility; something that someone must do

* As police officers, we have a duty to make this city safer for everyone.

bill – a proposal or an idea for a new law

* Has Maryland considered a bill that would make it illegal for people to drive while speaking on a cell phone?

presiding officer – the person who is responsible for or in charge of a meeting

* Every week, they choose a different presiding officer for their staff meeting.

to call on (someone) – to give someone permission to speak during a meeting; to say that it is okay for someone to speak

* The teacher calls on each student at least once per day.



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C: Rights and Responsibilities

48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.

Answer:

- Citizens eighteen (18) and older (can vote).
- You don't have to pay (a poll tax) to vote.
- Any citizen can vote. (Women and men can vote.)
- A male citizen of any race (can vote).

Explanation:

Voting is one of the important rights (or freedoms) that Americans have, but not everyone can vote. The Constitution, which is the most important legal document in the United States, has 27 **amendments** (or changes or additions to the Constitution that have been approved by the voters). Four of these amendments are about who can vote. Let's take a quick look at each of them.

The 15th Amendment was passed (or approved) in 1870. It **forbids** (or doesn't allow) the government to use **race** (or skin color) in deciding who is **eligible** (or has the right) to vote. Before this amendment was passed, many states did not allow black or African American people to vote in their elections. The 15th Amendment made that illegal (or against the law).

The next amendment related to voting was the 19th Amendment, passed in 1920. This amendment forbids the government to use **gender** (or whether someone is a man or a woman) in deciding who is eligible to vote. Before this amendment was passed, only men could vote. This amendment gave women the right to vote.

In 1964, the 24th Amendment was passed. It **prohibits** (or doesn't allow) the government to make people pay money to vote. Before 1964, some states had made voters pay a tax (or money paid to the government) to **cast their ballot** (or vote). This made it very difficult or impossible for poor people to vote and that is why it was made illegal.

The fourth and final (or last) amendment related to voting was the 26th Amendment passed in 1971. This amendment grants (or gives) **suffrage** (or the right to vote) to American citizens who are at least 18 years old. Before this amendment was passed, many states would let people vote only if they were at least 21 years old. Many people thought that this was unfair, since young men could join the army when they were 18, dying for their country before they were able to vote. With this amendment, however, American citizens can begin voting once they are 18 years old.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.

amendment – a change or addition, especially to the U.S. Constitution

* Which amendment to the Constitution allowed non-whites to vote?

to forbid – to prohibit; to not allow something; to make something illegal or unacceptable

* Her parents forbid her from seeing that boy again because they think he's a bad influence on her.

race – a person's skin color or ethnic background

* Have you ever dated someone outside of your own race?

eligible – meeting the requirements to do something; allowed to do something because one meets all of the requirements

* Jenna isn't eligible for some scholarship programs because her parents have too much money.

gender – sex; whether someone is a man or a woman

* Many people show babies' gender by dressing boys in blue and girls in pink.

to prohibit – to forbid; to not allow something; to make something illegal or unacceptable

* Customers are prohibited from using the store's bathroom.

to cast (one's) ballot – to vote; to complete a ballot and give it to the officials

* Who did you cast your ballot for in the last election?

suffrage – the right to vote; the freedom to be allowed to vote

* Who is the most famous person who fought for women's suffrage in the United States?



Introduction to the United States
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49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?

Answer:

- Serve on a jury
- Vote

Explanation:

People who come to live in the United States as **resident aliens** (or people who can live and work in the United States but are not citizens) can do almost everything that American citizens can do, but there are two important differences. Only U.S. citizens can vote and serve on a jury.

In most countries, the **right** (or freedom) to vote is only for citizens. It makes sense that only the people who officially belong to a country should have the right to vote there. Serving on a jury, though, is not a right that is talked about as much as voting.

In the United States, all people have the right to a **trial by jury**. A trial is a lawsuit or a case heard (or argued and discussed) in a court. If someone says that you have done something illegal (or against the law), you can argue about it in a court. This is your trial. The people who decide whether you are **guilty** (or that you have committed a crime) are the **jury**. The jury is the small group of people who will listen to the whole trial and then make a decision about whether or not you are guilty. They bring their decision back to the **judge** (or the person who manages the trial and courtroom) and he or she decides what your **punishment** will be (or how much money you will have to pay or how long you will be in jail for what you have done).

American citizens have the responsibility to serve on a jury. We call this **jury duty** and it begins when you get a letter in the mail **summoning** you (or telling you to come) to jury duty. Then you go to the court on the date stated (or written) in the letter. Many other people who were also summoned go to the court that same day. If you are selected for jury duty, then you have to watch the whole trial. Employers (or the people or company that you work for) give their employees **time off** (or permission to not come to work) for jury duty. Usually jury duty lasts only a few days, but if you are put on a very long and difficult trial, it can last weeks or even months.

Since people in most states are paid only a very small amount of money by the court to be on jury duty, some people try to avoid (or not serve on) jury duty. But if everyone avoided jury duty, we wouldn't have enough people to decide cases. So serving on a jury is an important duty (or responsibility).



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?

resident alien – a person who can live and work in the United States but is not a citizen

* How many years have you been a resident alien of the United States?

right – the power or ability to do something; a freedom

* If you are arrested, you have the right to remain silent and not say anything to the police officers.

trial by jury – a lawsuit in a court where a small group of people decides whether or not a person has done something against the law

* In a trial by jury, people just like you and me make decisions about whether people have broken the law.

guilty – having committed a crime; having done something wrong

* The man said that he was not guilty of robbing the store, even though there was a video that showed him doing it.

jury – a small group of people who listen to a trial and decide whether or not a person has done something against the law

* The members of the jury discussed the case for hours, trying to decide whether or not the woman had stolen the money.

judge – a person whose job is to manage a trial and courtroom and decide whether a person should be punished for breaking the law

* The judge said that the criminal would go to jail for 10 years.

punishment – something that one must pay or do as a penalty for having done something wrong; how much money one will have to pay or how long one will be in jail for what one has done

* Maggie took away her son's cell phone for one week as a punishment for getting bad grades.

jury duty – the period of time when a person stops doing his or her regular job and goes to court to listen to a case and decide whether someone has broken the law

* William was on jury duty for several weeks because he was assigned to a famous murder trial.



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to summon (someone) – for someone with power or authority to tell someone else to come to a particular place at a particular time

* All of the employees have been summoned to an emergency meeting this afternoon.

time off – permission to not come to work for a specific period of time

* Torsten plans to take some time off when his son is born next month.



Introduction to the United States
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50. What are two rights only for United States citizens?

Answer:

- Apply for a federal job
- Vote
- Run for office
- Carry a U.S. passport

Explanation:

The United States is a land of **opportunity**, which means that there are a lot of things that people can achieve (or do) if they want to. But some opportunities are **reserved** (or set aside) only for U.S. citizens. What can citizens do that no one else can? Only U.S. citizens can vote, apply for a federal job, run for office, and carry a U.S. passport.

Only U.S. citizens can vote in city, state, and federal (or national) elections. This is both a **right** (something that one can do) and a **responsibility** (something that one should do). Many Americans choose not to vote, but they always have the opportunity to participate in elections if they want to.

U.S. citizens can also apply for federal jobs (or jobs with the national government). These jobs are not available to people who are not U.S. citizens. Sometimes this is because of the **risk** (or the possibility of something bad happening) of national secrets (or important information other people shouldn't know about) being given to other countries. Another reason that federal jobs are not available to people who are not U.S. citizens is that Americans want their **taxes** (or money that they pay to the government) to be used to pay other Americans and not people from other countries.

U.S. citizens may **run for office** (or try to get elected (or chosen) for a political job by voters). This can be anything from the **mayor** (or elected leader) of a city to the president of the United States and every job in between. Often there are other requirements to run for office, such as age or residency (or the amount of time that someone has lived in a certain place).

Finally, only U.S. citizens can carry (or have and travel with) a U.S. passport. Not all citizens have a passport. It is a document that we must **apply** for (or fill out a form to request). But all Americans are **entitled** (or have the right) to get a passport and travel to other countries. People who are not U.S. citizens, of course, cannot have a U.S. passport.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

50. What are two rights only for United States citizens?

opportunity – something that a person can be or do if one wants to

* Carlotta had an opportunity to be on the radio, but she was too shy and decided not to do it.

reserved for (something or someone) – set aside for; arranged for the use of something by a specific person or group of people

* I'm sorry, but this table is reserved for someone else. Could you please sit over there instead?

right – the power or ability to do something; a freedom

* What gives you the right to not stand in line and wait like the rest of us?

responsibility – something that one should do; something that one needs to do

* Few people would argue that parents have the responsibility to help their children succeed in life.

risk – the possibility of something bad happening

* There's more risk of losing our money in the stock market than in a bank account.

taxes – money that people and businesses pay to the government so that it can do good things for its citizens

* What percentage of Americans' taxes is used to build new roads?

to run for office – to try to be elected to a public position; to try to get a public job through votes

* Kiki ran for office in 2005, but she didn't win the election.

mayor – the elected leader of a city or a metropolitan area

* The mayor became very popular after she said that she would punish dishonest city workers.

to apply for something – to fill out a form to request something, often to enter a program or to receive a document

* What documents do I need to bring when I apply for a passport?

entitled – with the right to have or get something; allowed to do something

* With membership in our health club, you're entitled to use all of the fitness equipment and to sign up for exercise classes.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?

Answer:

- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of assembly
- Freedom to petition the government
- Freedom of worship
- The right to bear arms

Explanation:

The United States is full of many different kinds of people with many different experiences, education, and beliefs. But no matter how different they are, they all have certain **rights** (or things that people can do) **in common**, meaning that they all have the same basic rights. The freedom of expression and freedom of speech let people say whatever they want to, with only a few exceptions or limitations. Freedom of assembly lets people meet in groups. Freedom to petition the government lets people try to change their government and ask it to help them. Freedom of worship lets people follow whatever religion they want to, or none at all. And finally, the right to bear arms lets people buy and have guns.

That last right, the right to bear arms, is much more **controversial** (or is not easy for people to agree about) than the other rights. Because Americans have the right to **bear** (or have and use) **arms** (which include guns and other weapons), there are many guns owned by individual people for their own use in the United States. Some of these guns just stay in the homes or are used to **hunt** (or kill animals, usually to eat the meat). But other guns are used to hurt and kill people illegally. Some people believe that if we didn't have the right to bear arms, there wouldn't be as many **lethal** (or deadly) shootings.

When the Founding Fathers gave Americans the right to bear arms, people who fought in the **militia** (or the army) were not professional soldiers. They were everyday people who helped to fight for their country and they had to bring their own guns. Many people think that the Founding Fathers gave Americans the right to bear arms so that our country could fight against its **enemies** (or the people and countries who are against our country). The Founding Fathers could not have imagined the situation today, where many people have guns and use them illegally. The people who think this way would like to **get rid of** (or not have) the right to bear arms.

But other people strongly think that Americans should continue to have the right to bear arms. They think that having a gun is part of what it means to be an American. Because people on both sides of the issue have such strong beliefs, the right to bear arms continues to be very controversial.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?

right – the power or ability to do something; a freedom

* Do you think that people have a right to privacy?

in common – shared; something that two or more people have that are the same

* The only thing the two brothers have in common is that they love hockey.

controversial – something that is argued about a lot because people have very strong and different opinions about it

* Using illegal drugs as medicine is a very controversial topic.

to bear – to have and use something, especially guns or other weapons

* Will the new police officers bear guns while patrolling schools?

arms – guns and other weapons

* The museum is having an exhibition of arms from World War I.

to hunt – kill animals for sport and/or to eat the meat

* In which months are people allowed to hunt deer?

lethal – deadly; able to kill someone or an animal

* He swallowed a lethal amount of aspirin to try to end his own life.

militia – army; military; a group of people who are trained to work as soldiers even though they are not part of the government's official army

* How many people fought in the state militia?

enemy – a person or country whom one is fighting against; a person or country who is against one's country

* Russia and the United States were enemies during the Cold War.

to get rid of (something) – to no longer have something; to throw something away; to stop having something

* I need to get rid of all these old clothes that don't fit me anymore.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?

Answer:

- The United States
- The flag

Explanation:

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Probably almost all Americans can **recite** (or say without reading) this **pledge** (or promise) of **allegiance** (or loyalty). When we say the Pledge of Allegiance, we are promising to be loyal to the United States and its **flag**, which is a piece of fabric that represents the country. The United States flag has red and white stripes and there is a blue square that has 50 white stars. The Pledge of Allegiance reminds us that we must love our country and should not do anything to hurt it.

When Americans say the Pledge of Allegiance, they must stand up, look at the flag, and put their right hand over their heart, on the left side of their chest. Let's look at the words of the pledge of allegiance in more depth (or detail).

The Pledge of Allegiance begins by saying, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America..." This means that we promise to be loyal to the United States flag. The Pledge continues, "...and to the Republic for which it stands...." A **republic** is a country or nation with an elected president and representatives, so we are promising to be loyal not only to the flag, but also to the country that the flag represents – in this case, the United States.

Then the Pledge says, "...one Nation under God..." This means that our country is one **united** nation (made of one piece, without many separate parts) and that God is **watching over** (or taking care of) the country. Then the Pledge says that our nation is "**indivisible** (or cannot be divided into smaller pieces), with liberty and justice for all." **Liberty** is freedom and **justice** is fairness in the law.

Most Americans learn to recite the Pledge of Allegiance when they are very young, reciting the Pledge every morning before classes begin in school. As adults, we don't say the Pledge of Allegiance very often, but it is used for special occasions, like when people from other countries become U.S. citizens.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?

to recite – to say something from memory, without reading it; to say or repeat something

* Can you recite any poems from memory?

pledge – a promise; something that one says one will do

* When he became a doctor, he pledged to take care of all his patients equally.

allegiance – loyalty; faithfulness to something; always giving or showing strong support to someone or something

* Soldiers used to show allegiance to their king by fighting well in battles.

flag – a colored piece of fabric, usually a rectangle, that represents the country

* The flag of Peru is red and white.

republic – a country or nation

* When did the Republic of Macedonia become an independent country?

united – made of one piece, without many separate parts; joined

* The teachers made a united effort to improve students' reading skills.

to watch over (something) – to take care of something; to be responsible for something

* Who is going to watch over the kids when you go to the movies tomorrow night?

indivisible – cannot be divided into smaller pieces; cannot be separated or pulled apart

* The principal didn't like seeing students form indivisible social groups, with students not making friends outside of their own group.

liberty – freedom

* When Americans fought for freedom, many of them shouted, "Give me freedom or give me death!"

justice – fairness in the law; being fair and reasonable

* Do you think there is justice in sending thieves to prison for the rest of their lives?



Introduction to the United States
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53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?

Answer:

- Give up loyalty to other countries
- Defend the Constitution and laws of the United States
- Obey the laws of the United States
- Serve in the U.S. military (if needed)
- Serve (do important work for) the nation (if needed)
- Be loyal to the United States

Explanation:

Changing one's **citizenship** (or the country that one belongs to) is a very serious life decision. Sometimes people think they want to become U.S. citizens because they want to have the **benefits** (or the good things) that all Americans have, such as having a U.S. passport or the ability to get a federal (or national) job. But there are many other **implications** (or things that happen as a result of something else) of becoming a U.S. citizen.

People who become U.S. citizens must promise to be **loyal** to (or supportive of) the United States. At the same time, they must promise to **give up** (or no longer have) loyalty to other countries. In other words, when they become citizens of the United States, they can no longer be a citizen of another country. They have to give up their citizenship in the other country. This can be difficult for people who love their home country very much, because they might feel that they are **betraying** (or doing something against) the country they grew up in.

People who become U.S. citizens also must promise to **obey** (or follow) the laws of the United States and to **defend** (or help protect) the country's Constitution (or its most important legal document) and laws. This might mean **speaking up** (or saying something) when one sees that Americans' rights are in danger of being taken away.

Finally, people who become U.S. citizens must promise to serve (or do important work for) the country if it is needed. They also have to promise to serve in the U.S. military if needed. Young men who become U.S. citizens need to **register** (or sign up) with the Selective Service so that their name is on the list of people who can be called to serve in the Army if there is a war.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?

citizenship – the right to belong to a country

* One of the benefits of U.S. citizenship is that Americans can travel to many other countries without a visa.

benefit – a good thing about having or doing something

* The major benefit of saving money when you're young is that you'll have more money when you want to stop working.

implication – something that happens as a result of something else

* The implication of having a lot of new government programs is that taxes will be raised.

loyal to (something) – supportive of something

* Andy has been loyal to the company for more than 20 years.

to give up (something) – to no longer have something; to let something go away

* He had to give up all his possessions when he joined the church.

to betray – to do something against someone or something; to break someone's trust

* Bernard betrayed his best friend by telling his secret to other people.

to obey – to follow; to listen to; to do what one is told to do

* The police officer said that very few drivers obey the speed limit all the time.

to defend – to help protect something; to support and stand up for something

* What can we do to defend ourselves against attack?

to speak up – to say something; to express one's opinion

* If we don't like the way they're doing the work, we need to speak up and tell them.

to register – to sign up for something; to put one's name on a list to be able to do something

* Have you registered for classes at the community college?



Introduction to the United States
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54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?

Answer:

Eighteen (18) and older

Explanation:

Americans have many **rites of passage** (or important things that one does to move from one phase of one's life to another phase) when becoming adults. One rite of passage is getting a driver's license when they turn 16. Another rite of passage is being able to drink alcohol when they turn 21. And of course, at age 18 they can begin voting for the president of the United States. But this wasn't always true.

In the past, each state was able to **set** (or establish) its own voting age. Most states had a voting age of 21, but five states had younger voting ages. As the Vietnam War was being fought, there was a lot of **pressure** (or the feeling of needing to do something) to **standardize** (or to make the same) the voting age for the entire (or whole) country. Many young men who were only 18 years old were being **conscripted** (or forced to join the Army) to fight in the Vietnam War. These men were angry that they were being asked to fight for their country when they weren't able to vote for the country's leaders who were asking them to fight.

The people who wanted to standardize and lower (or reduce) the voting age to 18 had a popular **slogan** (or a phrase that many people repeat as a message about what they want to do or change). It was, "Old enough to fight, old enough to vote." They meant that since the nation had decided that 18-year-old men were old enough to be in the Army, it should also decide that they were old enough to vote.

In 1971, the voting age was finally standardized and lowered. The 26th Constitutional Amendment (or change or addition to the Constitution, the most important legal document in the country) was **ratified** (or approved and made into a law) on July 7, 1971. It made the legal voting age 18 years old for the entire country.

The Amendment had some **unintended** (or unexpected) **consequences**, which are things that happen as a result of doing something else. After lowering the voting age, most states began to lower the age for other things, such as getting married or making **contracts** (or legal agreements). Today, most Americans believe that people become adults on their 18th birthday.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?

rite of passage – an important thing that one does to move from one phase of one's life to another phase

* For many Americans, getting their first apartment is a rite of passage when they become an adult.

to set – to establish; to put; to place

* Please set the thermometer at 68 degrees.

pressure – the feeling of needing to do something

* The professor feels a lot of pressure to publish research articles.

to standardize – to make the same; to make many different things become the same in some way

* We need to standardize our company's policies so that all employees follow the same rules.

conscripted – forced to join the military; told by the government that one must join the military

* Some of the Americans who were conscripted for the Vietnam War decided to move to Canada so that they wouldn't have to fight.

slogan – a phrase that many people repeat as a message about what they want to do or change

* The slogan for our organization is: "Be part of the solution, not the problem."

ratified – approved and made into a law

* When was the 12th Constitutional Amendment ratified?

unintended – unexpected; not intentional; not planned; not meant to happen

* Many people use that product for unintended purposes.

consequence – something that happens as a result of doing something else

* The consequence of driving too quickly was that he got into an accident.

contract – a legal agreement

* They had to sign a 15-page contract when they moved into the apartment building.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?

Answer:

- Vote
- Join a political party
- Help with a campaign
- Join a civic group
- Join a community group
- Give an elected official your opinion on an issue
- Call Senators and Representatives
- Publicly support or oppose an issue or policy
- Run for office
- Write to a newspaper

Explanation:

The United States has a **representative democracy**, which means that citizens vote for people who will represent them in the government, making laws and decisions that reflect (or are the same as) what the citizens want. If Americans do not participate in their democracy, then the laws won't reflect what they want. That is why **civic involvement** (or participation in government) is extremely important in the United States.

The most basic (or easiest and simplest) type of civic involvement is to vote, but some people are much more **politically active** (or involved in government and politics). Many people choose to join a **political party**, which is a group of people who have similar beliefs about what the government should do and want to get power for their group in the government. Some of them help with **campaigns** (or the things people do to try to be elected to a government job) for their political party's **candidates** (or the people who are trying to be elected). Sometimes they help by calling **undecided voters** (or people who haven't yet decided whom they will vote for) or by visiting them in their homes.

Other people are more politically active for issues than for candidates. They might join a community group that tries to show people how important an issue is. They also call Senators and Representatives to try to get them to vote a certain way on important issues. Sometimes these people will talk to their friends and family about the issues and some of them even write **letters to the editor**, which is the part of the newspaper where people can write about their strong beliefs.

The people who have the highest level of civic involvement try to **run for office** (or try to get elected to a political position or job). Sometimes people begin locally, at first running for office in their neighborhood or city, but then **seeking office** (or trying to get elected) at the state or national level. Each and every American can choose how much civil involvement he or she wants to have.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?

representative democracy – a type of government in which citizens vote for people who represent them in the government, usually making laws and decisions

* Would you prefer to live in a country with a representative democracy or a dictatorship?

civic involvement – citizen participation in the government

* Writing letters to our representatives is a good example of civic involvement.

politically active – involved in the government and politics

* Radhika became politically active when she learned what her tax dollars were being used for.

political party – a group of people who have the same political beliefs and belong to the same political organization

* Let's organize a political party that focuses on immigration issues.

campaign – the things people do to try to be elected for a government job, and the period of time before people vote

* She sent thousands of postcards with her name, contact information, and photograph to voters as part of her political campaign.

candidate – a person who is trying to be elected to a government job

* Which candidate will you vote for, and why?

undecided voter – a person who hasn't yet decided whom he or she will vote for

* During the last months of the presidential campaign, everyone focuses on undecided voters, trying to get them to vote for their candidate.

letter to the editor – a part of the newspaper where people can write about their strong beliefs

* I wrote a letter to the editor to complain about the city's decision to close a park.

to run for office – to try to be elected to a public position; to try to get a public job through votes

* How many people are running for office this year?

to seek office – to try to be elected to a public position; to try to get a public job through votes

* Do you like any of the people who are seeking office?



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?

Answer:

April 15

Explanation:

There is a very well-known saying in English: “The only sure things (or things that will definitely happen) in life are death and taxes.” Just like there is no way to **avoid** death (or to not die), there is no way to avoid paying taxes, which is money that we pay to the government so that the government can provide education, security, and other services to its people. In the United States, everyone who makes money must pay federal (or national) **income taxes**, which is money we pay to the government based on how much money we have made.

In the United States, taxpayers must **file** (or send in) their own federal income tax **forms**, which are pieces of paper that request information and have spaces for us to write down that information. The tax forms request personal information like your name and address, as well as information about how much money you made in the past year. The forms always must be **postmarked** (or stamped by the post office) by April 15th. If the federal income tax forms are postmarked on a later date, the taxpayer will have to pay a **fine**, which is money that we must pay because we did something wrong.

Filing tax forms is not very difficult, but if you own your own business or have your money in a lot of other things to make money, it can be complicated. Many people **fill out** (or write in the answers on) their tax forms on their own. Other people have tax accountants, which are people who do taxes as their job, do it for them. Either way, it is important to keep all of our tax information organized throughout the year so that we will be ready when it is time to file taxes.

Throughout the year, the company where you work takes **withholdings**, which is money that you never see because the company sends it directly to the federal (or national) government. The withholdings are as much as you expect to **owe** (or need to pay) in taxes. Then, early in the following year, you file your tax forms. If your total tax owed is more than the withholdings, meaning you have not yet paid enough taxes, you will need to pay the difference between what you have already paid and what you owe. If the total amount of the taxes you owe is less than your withholdings, then you will get a **tax refund** (or money that is returned to you from the government because you have already paid too much).



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?

to avoid – to do something so that something else does not happen; to find a way to prevent something from happening

* They moved to Florida to avoid the cold weather in the winter months.

income tax – money that is paid to the government based on how much money one makes each year

* Last year we had to pay income taxes of 28.5% of the money we made.

to file (something) – to send in official documents; to submit documents

* Don't forget to file your application by September 28.

form – a piece of paper that requests information and has spaces where information can be written down

* To open a bank account, we only had to fill out one simple form.

postmarked – stamped by the post office on the day that something is mailed

* This letter was postmarked on March 15, but we didn't receive it until almost two weeks later.

fine – money that must be paid because one did something wrong or bad

* We had to pay a fine for returning our library books later than we were supposed to.

to fill out (something) – to write the requested information on a form (a piece of paper that requests information and has spaces where information can be written down)

* Please fill out this form with your name, email address, and telephone number.

withholdings – money that a worker never sees because the employer sends it directly to the government to pay for the worker's taxes

* Last year, we didn't have enough withholdings to cover our taxes, so we had to send the government more money.

to owe – to need to pay money to someone

* Maxine owes me \$8.00 because I paid for her lunch yesterday.

tax refund – money that is returned to a person from the government because he or she has paid too much in taxes

* Bella used her tax refund check to buy a new refrigerator.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?

Answer:

- At age eighteen (18)
- Between eighteen (18) and twenty-six (26)

Explanation:

In the United States, **military service** (or the time spent working in the army) is **voluntary** (or optional and something that one chooses to do). Under normal conditions, no one has to serve in the army if he or she doesn't want to. However, all men between the ages of 18 and 26 must **register** (or sign up for) the Selective Service, which is a part of the U.S. government that tries to find enough people to fight in a war or other national **emergency** (or a major problem that was not expected).

The Selective Service keeps a list of names of all the men who are registered for the Selective Service. If there is a war or another national emergency, the Selective Service will have a **draft**, which means that names are chosen **at random** (or with all of the names having an equal chance of being selected) to find out who will fight. We say that the people whose names are picked have been drafted for the war.

In a war or national emergency, men who are drafted go through several tests that determine whether or not they are ready to fight for their country. Those who pass the tests then must serve in the army. Those who don't pass the tests can go back home.

Some people do not want to fight because they believe that war is wrong, often because of their religious beliefs. These people are called **conscientious objectors**. Conscientious objectors must also register for the Selective Service. The Selective Service creates an Alternative Service Program for those conscientious objectors so that they will do good work to help communities in the United States while other men are drafted for war.

Registration with the Selective Service is required by law. Young men who do not register with the Selective Service have a lot of problems. For example, they cannot apply for federal jobs (or jobs in the national government) or get federal **scholarships**, which is money given to students to help pay for their education. Also, people from other countries cannot become U.S. citizens unless they register for the Selective Service.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?

military service – the period of time when a person works in the armed forces (organization with soldiers who fight for a country)

* He spent most of his military service in Central Asian countries.

voluntary – optional; something that one chooses to do but does not have to do

* Donating money to the church is voluntary, but highly encouraged.

to register – to sign up for something; to put one's name on a list to be able to do something

* Have you registered for swimming lessons?

emergency – a major problem that was not expected

* Hurricane Katrina created an emergency situation in New Orleans, Louisiana.

draft – the process of forcing young people to join the military during a war

* Gerardo never would have joined the army if he hadn't been called in the draft.

at random – happening without a plan or pattern; with all things having an equal likelihood of happening or being selected

* The sociologists called people at random to ask them their opinion about drug use.

conscientious objector – a person who does not join the military or fight in a war because he or she believes that war is wrong, often because of his or her religious beliefs

* As a conscientious objector, Artie didn't fight in the war, but instead helped to build roads in the United States.

scholarship – money given to a student to help pay for his or her education, usually because he or she doesn't have very much money and/or is a very good student or athlete

* Stanley received a \$10,000 scholarship to attend Nebraska State University.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

AMERICAN HISTORY

A: Colonial Period and Independence

58. What is one reason colonists came to America?

Answer:

- Freedom
- Political liberty
- Religious freedom
- Economic opportunity
- Practice their religion
- Escape persecution

Explanation:

When the **New World** (or North and South America before many Europeans were living there) was **discovered** (or learned about for the first time), going there was a big **adventure** (or an exciting experience in one's life, especially involving travel). European countries were establishing (or creating) **colonies**, which are areas of land that are far away but that belong to that country. Some of the colonists (or people who live in colonies) went there because they wanted an adventure, but most of them were **fleeing** (or running away from) something or **seeking** (or looking for) new opportunities.

Many of the countries in Europe were **oppressive** (or very controlling). Some of the people living there could not do all the things they wanted to do. In the countries ruled (or governed) by a king and queen, the people did not have any choice about who their leaders would be. Some of the people who fled Europe were looking for freedom and political liberty so that they could do more of the things they wanted to do and be able to decide what kind of government they wanted to have.

Other colonists were seeking religious freedom, which is the ability to follow whatever religion they wanted to, or no religion at all. In Europe, many people were **persecuted** (or treated unfairly) because of their religious beliefs. They thought that by coming to the colonies they would be able to **practice their religion** (or follow the teachings of a religion) freely, without anyone telling them that they couldn't do it.

Finally, there were colonists who went to the colonies seeking economic opportunity. In many European countries, there was a **class system**, which is a way of organizing society so that poor people stay poor and rich people stay rich, and it is difficult or impossible for poor people to become rich. People were frustrated because they had few or no opportunities to make more money or to live a better and more comfortable life. In the colonies, however, people who were willing to work hard had far fewer limitations, which meant that they could make their lives better if they wanted to. So colonists fled Europe and went to the colonies to seek these economic opportunities to improve life for themselves and their families.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

58. What is one reason colonists came to America?

New World – North and South America before very many Europeans lived there

* When did your great- great-grandparents come to the New World?

to discover – to learn about something for the first time; to learn about something that nobody else knows about

* How did Copernicus discover that Earth moves around the sun?

adventure – an exciting experience in one's life, especially involving traveling

* They decided to go on an adventure, riding their bicycles from New York to California.

colony – an area of land that is far away from the country it belongs to

* India was once a British colony.

to flee – to run away from something or someone, usually to leave a dangerous or difficult situation; to leave a dangerous or difficult situation

* They ran through the forest, fleeing the angry bees.

to seek office – to search; to look for something; to want to find something

* Co is seeking a challenging job in the energy industry.

oppressive – very controlling and overpowering, limiting what other people can do; allowing very little freedom

* The oppressive government controls what the people can say, do, eat, and wear.

to persecute – to attack or be mean to a group of people, treating them unfairly, usually because they are different than other people or because of their beliefs

* In Salem, Massachusetts, many women were persecuted because people thought they were witches.

to practice (one's) religion – to follow the teachings of a religion; to be part of a religion and do what it tells people to do

* She practices her religion by not eating meat on Fridays.

class system – a way of organizing society so that poor people stay poor and rich people stay rich, and it is difficult or impossible for poor people to become rich

* In a class system, if your father is a mechanic, you must work in a similar job, no matter how much you might like to be a doctor or lawyer.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?

Answer:

- Native Americans
- American Indians

Explanation:

Most Americans are taught that an **explorer** (or a person who goes to an unknown place to learn about it) named Christopher Columbus discovered (or found) America in 1492. But the truth is that millions of people were already living in North and South America before Christopher Columbus ever arrived on the American **shore** (or the land next to an ocean). Christopher Columbus was surprised to see the **natives** (or people who are born in America). He thought that he had landed in the East Indies on his way to India, so he called the people he met there Indians. Today, these people are usually called American Indians or Native Americans.

The arrival of Christopher Columbus and other Europeans in the New World (or North and South America) was **devastating** (or extremely bad) for the Native Americans. Millions of Native Americans died because of **epidemic diseases**, which were illnesses that made a large number of the Native Americans sick very quickly. Many of the diseases that were common in the Old World (or Europe) were **unheard of** (or unknown) in the New World. The American Indians did not have the **immunities** that Europeans did, which meant that their bodies did not have the ability to fight against the diseases. When the Europeans came, they **inadvertently** (or without knowing or wanting to) infected the Native Americans and made them ill. Many of them died without ever knowing what was happening.

The Native Americans who didn't die from disease were often killed by the Europeans. Almost all of the Europeans who came to America wanted the Native Americans to become more like them, and especially to become Christian and believe in the Christian God. They killed Native Americans who **resisted** (or fought against) their efforts.

As more and more Europeans began living in and being born in the New World, they needed more land, so they began to **displace** the Native Americans, which means that the Native Americans were made to move to other lands so that the Europeans could use them for farming. Over time, the Native Americans were pushed further and further west to lands that were not very good for growing things. Many Native Americans died while walking to those new lands, and many others died when there wasn't enough water and food in those new lands.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?

explorer – a person who goes to an unknown place to learn about it

* Robert Edwin Peary was a famous American explorer who went to the North Pole.

shore – land next to an ocean

* We stood on the shore and waved as their boat went out to sea.

native – a person who was born in a particular place and has always lived there

* The first Europeans to come to America were surprised to see so many natives already living there.

devastating – extremely bad; horrible and destructive

* The floods were devastating for small towns in Iowa.

epidemic disease – an illness that makes a very large number of people very sick very quickly

* How many people are killed by epidemic diseases each year?

unheard of – unknown; unusual; very unlikely to happen

* Marrying for love used to be almost unheard of.

immunity – a body's ability to fight against a specific disease, so that even if a person is exposed to a disease, he or she does not get sick

* I wish I had an immunity for the common cold!

inadvertently – without knowing or wanting to; having something happen unintentionally; without realizing what is happening

* Have you ever inadvertently sent an email to the wrong person?

to resist – to fight against something; to try not to let something happen

* Yolanda wants to lose weight, but she has a hard time resisting ice cream.

to displace – to force someone to leave a particular area so that one can use that area for oneself; to force people to leave an area because of dangerous events

* How many people were displaced by the earthquake?



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?

Answer:

- Africans
- people from Africa

Explanation:

When Europeans began to live in the United States, they had a lot of work to do. They needed to make farms so that people would have enough to eat, build towns and cities, and build roads so that people could go between the towns and cities. There was too much work to do and not enough people to do it. So Europeans began to use **slaves** (or people who are forced to work without pay and are owned by other people). Most of the slaves were black people from Africa who were taken to America and sold to wealthy (or rich) people.

Africans were treated very poorly on the **slave ships**, which were large boats that brought slaves from Africa, and many of them died before getting to America. Historians (or people who study history) **estimate** (or guess) that about 645,000 Africans were brought to the United States. By 1860, the number of Africans had grown to around 4 million slaves. Most of these slaves lived and worked in the Southern United States, where cotton **fields** (or areas where something is grown for food or clothing) needed a lot of **labor** (or hard work). Many of them worked on large **plantations**, which were very large farms.

Slavery was legal (or allowed by law) from 1654 to 1865. During this time, most slaves were treated very badly by their owners. Slaves were often **whipped** (or hit with a long piece of leather to cut a person's back) and **beaten** (or hit badly). Female slaves were often **raped** (or forced to have sex) by their owners. Black families were often separated (or forced to leave each other) when children were sold separately from their parents. For all these reasons, over time people began to think that slavery was wrong. Eventually slavery was made illegal (or against the law) when the 13th Constitutional Amendment was passed (or made into law) in 1865.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?

slave – a person who is forced to work without pay and is owned by another person

* Many of the big farms in the southern United States used hundreds of slaves.

slave ship – a large boat that brought slaves (people who were forced to work without pay and were owned by other people) from Africa to America

* Many Africans died on slave ships without ever reaching America.

estimate – to guess at the amount of something without calculating it or knowing the exact amount

* They estimated that about 4,000 people were at the concert.

field – an area where something is grown for food, clothing, housing, or other things

* We have large corn fields around our house.

labor – hard work done by people; physical work

* Labor is the biggest expense of owning and running a restaurant.

plantation – a very large farm, mostly in the southern United States

* Gone with the Wind is a popular book about a woman who grew up on a large cotton plantation.

to whip – to hit a person with a long piece of leather to cut a person's body and cause pain

* The man was whipped for having stolen bread.

to beat – to hit a person very badly to cause pain

* Our neighbor was arrested for beating his wife.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

61. Why did the colonists fight the British?

Answer:

- because of high taxes (taxation without representation)
- because the British army stayed in their houses (boarding, quartering)
- because they didn't have self-government

Explanation:

When people first began living in the British **colonies** (or areas of land that belonged to Great Britain but that were far away), they still thought of themselves as British citizens. But over time, something changed. They began to **rebel** against (or stop obeying) the British government because they thought that they were being treated unfairly. The people had created a new **identity** (or the way that they saw and understood themselves) and were becoming Americans. They began to fight against the British for three main (or most important) reasons: high taxes, quartering, and the lack of self-government. Let's look at each of these three reasons.

The new Americans were unhappy with the high **taxes** (or money paid to the government) that were **imposed** (or forced on them) by the British government. It was **taxation without representation**, meaning that Americans were supposed to pay money to the British government even though they had no representation or ability to give their opinion in that government. This made the new Americans very angry.

Americans were also angry about the way that the British army treated them. British **soldiers** (or people who work in the army) were often **quartered** (or allowed to live, eat, and sleep in a place for a short period of time) in American homes without the permission (or approval) of the person who owned the home. Often these soldiers behaved very badly while they were in the home. This is the second reason why the new Americans decided to begin fighting against the British.

The third reason that Americans fought against the British was because they **lacked** (or didn't have) self-government, which was the ability to create and run their own government. The land that would become the United States was far away from Great Britain, yet all the government decisions were being made in Great Britain. The new Americans **longed** (or strongly wanted) to make their own decisions, but the British wouldn't let them.

So Americans fought against the British, and this fighting became known as the American Revolution, or the war that ended when the United States became its own country, separate from Great Britain.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

61. Why did the colonists fight the British?

colony – an area of land that is far away from the country it belongs to

* Pennsylvania was one of the earliest British colonies in North America.

to rebel against (something or someone) – to stop obeying something or someone; to stop doing what one has been told to do

* Many teenagers rebel against their parents by wearing strange clothing and staying out later than they are supposed to.

self-identity – the way that one sees and understands oneself

* Alexia's identity changed when she stopped working and decided to stay at home with her children.

taxes – money that people and businesses pay to the government so that it can do good things for its citizens

* If we raise taxes, the library will be able to buy more books.

to impose (something) on (someone) – to force someone to do or have something, especially if he or she does not want it

* Europeans imposed their way of life on Native Americans.

taxation without representation – a system where a group of people paying money to a government when they cannot give their opinion to that government

* Taxation without representation was one of the main reasons why Americans wanted to form their own government.

soldier – a person who fights in the military; a person who fights in the war

* Soldier need to know how to use guns.

quartered – allowed to live, eat, and sleep in a place for a short period of time

* During the storm, the refugees were quartered in other people's homes in a nearby town.

lack – to not have something that one needs

* They lacked food and water for two days when they got lost in the forest.

to long – to strongly want to have or do something

* Gray longed to travel to other states, but he didn't have enough vacation time.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

Answer:

(Thomas) Jefferson

Explanation:

There is a funny story that shows how many Americans think of Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States. One day, President John F. Kennedy (our thirty-fifth president) was in the White House, which is the building where the U.S. president lives. He was there with 49 Nobel Prize winners. (The Nobel Prize is an award given to people who have done very important work in different fields all over the world.) President Kennedy said that this was the greatest group of human knowledge and talent that had ever been together in the White House, except when Thomas Jefferson ate there alone. This was his funny way of saying that Thomas Jefferson was a great man in American history who was good at many things, much more than other people, even a group of some of the world's smartest people!

Thomas Jefferson is famous for many things. He was the second vice-president and the third president of the United States, but he is even better known for having written the **Declaration of Independence**, or the letter that was written to let Great Britain know that its colonies had become the United States, an independent country. Thomas Jefferson was one of the most **influential** Founding Fathers (meaning he was able to affect other people's opinions) who helped to create the United States. While he was president, he sent two men named Lewis and Clark to explore the western part of North America. He also **negotiated** (or arranged) the Louisiana Purchase, which allowed the United States to buy a lot of land from France.

Thomas Jefferson was born in 1743 and was a **Renaissance man**, which means he was a man who has a lot of different types of knowledge and knows how to do many different things. He was a gardener, a politician, an author, an architect (or someone who designed buildings), and an **inventor** (or a person who makes new things that no one else had thought of before). He was the **founder** of (or the person who started) the University of Virginia.

Thomas Jefferson built a home called Monticello in Virginia. It is still there today, and many people go to visit it and learn more about this great man. At Monticello, people can see his architectural designs and many of his inventions, like **automatic doors** (or doors that open without being touched) and the **swivel chair** (or a chair that turns in circles while a person is sitting on it).



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

Declaration of Independence – the letter that was written to let Great Britain know that its colonies had become the United States, an independent country

* Visitors who go to the National Archives in Washington, DC can see the original Declaration of Independence.

influential – able to affect other people's opinions and actions

* This television show has been very influential in women's fashion.

to negotiate – to discuss something, trying to get the other person or organization to agree to what one wants

* It took several months, but the company finally negotiated an agreement with its workers.

Renaissance man – a man who has many different types of knowledge and knows how to do many different things

* Clarke is a Renaissance man who speaks four languages, understands science, reads classic literature, gardens, and more.

inventor – a person who makes new things that no one else had thought of before

* Who was the inventor of the first computer?

founder – the person who starts an organization or company

* Each year we honor the founder of our organization by having a celebration.

automatic doors – doors that open without being touched when a person comes near them

* Many American stores have automatic doors for their customers.

swivel chair – a chair that can turn in circles while a person is sitting on it

* The receptionist has a swivel chair so that he can turn between the computer, printer, and telephone without having to stand up.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?

Answer:

July 4, 1776

Explanation:

Sometimes when an American wants you to **sign** your name (or write your name in a way that only you can do it, usually to show that you agree with something), he or she will say: “Put your John Hancock here.” That phrase relates to the U.S.

Declaration of Independence, which was a letter that Americans wrote to let Britain know that they no longer wanted to be **ruled** (or controlled) by the British government. The Declaration of Independence was signed by 56 men, but John Hancock’s signature was the first and biggest signature on the document. It was so big and **bold** (or large and showing that he was not afraid of anyone or anything), that today people say “Put your John Hancock here” when they want you to sign something.

The Declaration of Independence was **adopted** (or accepted) by the original 13 states on July 4, 1776. Today we celebrate a holiday called Independence Day every Fourth of July, because that is the day when the United States got its **independence** (or freedom) from Britain.

But the Declaration of Independence did more than just get independence from Britain. It also said many important things about **human rights** (or the things that all people should be allowed to do and to have). One of the most well-known phrases in the Declaration is that “all men are created equal.” This was important, because at the time the Declaration was written, not all men were treated equally. That is one of the reasons that Americans wanted their independence from Britain. They thought that they weren’t being treated as well as British people were being treated, so they wanted to create their own government.

The Declaration of Independence also listed many of the Americans’ **complaints** (or things that they didn’t like) about the British government, like not letting them make laws where they lived, and making them pay a lot of taxes (or money that was given to the government). The list of complaints became the Americans’ **justification** (or reason) for creating an independent country.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?

to sign (something) – to write one's name on something, usually to show approval or agreement

* Please sign your name here to show that you've received the package.

Declaration of Independence – the letter that was written to let Great Britain know that its colonies had become the United States, an independent country

* The Declaration of Independence is one of the most important documents in American history.

to rule – to govern or control; to have official power in an area and/or over a group of people

* Who ruled Great Britain in 1925?

bold – large and clear; actions showing that one is not afraid of anyone or anything; courageous and brave

* It was very bold of you to ask him to stop shouting when everyone else was scared to do it.

to adopt – to accept something and begin to do, use, or have it

* In our home, we've adopted the custom of taking off our shoes before we enter the house.

independence – freedom; the ability of a country or area to make its own decisions, especially about its government

* The Revolutionary War was a fight for American independence from Great Britain.

human rights – the things that all people should be allowed to do and to have

* The freedom to be educated, live where one wants, and marry whom one wants are all examples of human rights.

complaint – something that one says or writes down to let others know that one doesn't like it or thinks it is wrong

* The manager has received a lot of complaints about how the new employees speak to customers.

justification – a reason for doing something; an explanation for why one has done something

* There's no justification for treating other people that badly.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

64. There were 13 original states. Name three.

Answer:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|
| • New Hampshire | • New Jersey | • North Carolina |
| • Massachusetts | • Pennsylvania | • South Carolina |
| • Rhode Island | • Delaware | • Georgia |
| • Connecticut | • Maryland | |
| • New York | • Virginia | |

Explanation:

Once Europeans arrived to North America, they began to fill up the land very quickly. Many Europeans moved to the land that would later become the United States. European countries like Britain, France, and Spain created **colonies** (or areas of land that belong to a country but are far away). Britain had 13 colonies, and those colonies later became the original 13 states of the United States.

The 13 colonies can be divided into four groups: the Southern Colonies, the Chesapeake Bay Colonies, the Middle Colonies, and New England. The Southern Colonies were Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. These colonies had very good weather for farming and were mostly used for growing cotton and **tobacco** (or a plant that is smoked in cigarettes). There was a lot of work to do on the **plantations** (or large farms), so the Southern Colonies had many **slaves** (or people who were owned as property and forced to work without being paid).

A little further north were the Chesapeake Bay Colonies of Maryland and Virginia. A **bay** is a large area of water that is mostly surrounded by land. The city of Jamestown in Virginia is famous for being the first permanent English **settlement** (or a place where people begin living) in America. It was founded (or created) in 1607. Many of the people who lived there died from hunger, cold, and attacks by the Native Americans, but Jamestown **survived** (or continued to exist), and today people can visit Jamestown to learn about its history.

The Middle Colonies, which used to be called New Netherlands, were Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The people living in these colonies had many different religions and had a lot of **tolerance**, which meant that they had the ability to live with other people who were very different from themselves. This was very different from the situation in Europe.

The last four colonies, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, made up New England. We still call the northeastern part of the United States “New England.” These were some of the first colonies that wanted independence from Britain. They were also the first colonies to make their own **coins** (or money made from small, round, flat pieces of metal).



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

64. There were 13 original states. Name three.

colony – an area of land that is far away from the country it belongs to

* The 13 American colonies became the first states in the United States of America.

tobacco – a plant whose leaves are smoked in cigarettes

* Phuong is addicted to tobacco and cannot stop smoking cigarettes, even though he would like to.

plantation – a very large farm, mostly in the southern United States

* Many old plantations have been converted into museums for tourists to visit.

slave – a person who is forced to work without pay and is owned by another person

* Many slaves were taken away from their parents when they were young children.

bay – a large area of water that is mostly surrounded by land

* Have you ever ridden in a boat in the Chesapeake Bay?

settlement – a place where people begin living, where people had not lived before

* It must have been difficult for Europeans to start the first settlements in North America.

to survive – to continue to exist; to live through danger or a difficult situation

* Everyone was surprised that the little girl survived after being lost on the mountain for almost one week.

tolerance – the ability to live with people who are very different from oneself and/or do things that one does not agree with

* We need to learn to show more tolerance toward people who are different from us.

coin – a piece of money made from metal; a small, round piece of metal that is used as money

* In the United States, we call a 10-cent coin a "dime."



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?

Answer:

- The Constitution was written.
- The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution.

Explanation:

When the 13 American colonies (or areas of land ruled by Great Britain but far away from it) got their independence (or freedom) from Britain, they did not have a strong government. They agreed to follow a document called the **Articles of Confederation**, but it wasn't strong enough for the new country. So political leaders decided to have a meeting called the **Constitutional Convention**. Some of the people who went to the Constitutional Convention wanted to improve (or make better) the Articles of Confederation. Others wanted to create a new type of government.

The Constitutional Convention was held from May 25th to September 17th, 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. During that time, political leaders **discussed** (or talked about) many important issues. One of the main disagreements was how Americans should be represented in the **legislature** (or the lawmaking part of the government). People from large states wanted representation to be based on population, while people from small states wanted each state to have equal representation. A man from Connecticut, Roger Sherman, finally **solved** (or found an answer to) the problem when he created the Connecticut **Compromise**, which was a solution that gave everybody some, but not all, of what they wanted. The Connecticut Compromise created the House of Representatives, where representation is based on population, and the Senate, where representation is equal for all states.

Another disagreement at the Constitutional Convention was how the votes of **slaves** (or people who were owned as property and were forced to work without being paid) should be counted. About 20% of the U.S. population was slaves, and most of them were in the South. States with many slaves wanted them to be counted for representation in the legislature, but not for taxes (or money paid to the government). States without slaves wanted them to be counted for taxes, but not for representation. The solution was another compromise: to count each slave as three-fifths (or 60%) of a person.

There were many other disagreements during the Constitutional Convention, but eventually the Constitution (or the most important legal document in the United States) was written. The men who were at the Constitutional Convention are often called our Founding Fathers, because they were the people who helped to **found** (or create) the U.S. government as we know it today.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?

Articles of Confederation – a 1781 agreement that created the first government of the United States

* What are the main differences between the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution?

Constitutional Convention – the meeting where the U.S. Constitution was written

* Some of the most famous people in U.S. history attended the Constitutional Convention.

to discuss (something) – to talk about something; to have a conversation about something

* Have you discussed with your boss the idea of hiring an assistant?

legislature – the lawmaking part of the government

* The state legislature made more than 40 new laws last year.

to solve (something) – to find an answer or solution to something; to fix something

* How did you solve problem #7 in the math homework?

compromise – a solution that gives everybody some, but not all, of what they want

* He said that the secret to his good marriage is to know how to make compromises with his wife.

slave – a person who is forced to work without pay and is owned by another person

* Slaves worked so hard that they often died while they were still very young.

to found – to create or establish an organization, business, or government

* Who founded the first university in the United States?



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

66. When was the Constitution written?

Answer:

1787

Explanation:

Have you ever worked hard to write a long report or essay and then waited **anxiously** (or with a lot of worry and stress) to find out whether the teacher would like it? The men who wrote the Constitution (or the country's most important legal document) must have felt the same way. They worked very hard between May and September of 1787. When they finished, they had a long document that they were very **proud** of (or that they felt very pleased with), but the Constitution hadn't yet become a law. First, it would have to be **ratified** (or approved) by the states.

Only nine of the states needed to ratify the Constitution, but getting all 13 states to ratify it would be important for helping the country to feel **unified** (or as one whole country made up of many parts). At first, it didn't look like enough states would ratify it. There was **bitter** (or very strong and negative) disagreement about the Constitution.

One group of people who were called "Federalists" thought that there were many problems with the Articles of Confederation, which was the legal document that the 13 states had been following. The Federalists believed that adopting the Constitution was the only way to fix the problems that the country was having. The Federalists thought that only the Constitution would be able to help the new country keep its independence (or freedom) from Britain.

Another large group of people known as the "Antifederalists" thought that the Constitution would **destroy** (or ruin) everything good about America. They thought that the Constitution would **centralize** the government too much (or make the national government too powerful, with little or no power for the states).

The Federalists and Antifederalists argued with each other for a long time, but **eventually** (or after a long time) the Constitution was ratified. The first five states ratified it very quickly, between December 1787 and January 1788. The other states took much longer, and the state of Rhode Island didn't ratify the Constitution until May of 1790. But when all 13 states had finally ratified the Constitution, the whole United States **was behind** (or supported) the new government.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

66. When was the Constitution written?

anxiously – with a lot of worry and stress

* The students are waiting anxiously to receive their test results.

proud – very pleased with; very happy that one has done something, or very happy with how well one has done something

* We're very proud of Alina for graduating college with honors.

to ratify – to approve and make into a law

* How long does it take for a Constitutional amendment to be ratified?

unified – as one group; together

* A good way to reduce crime in our neighborhood is to form a group of unified neighbors to watch over each other's homes.

bitter – having very negative and unhappy feelings

* She had such a bitter experience in that store that she'll never shop there again.

to destroy – to ruin something; to change something so that it can never be used again or so that it no longer functions

* Water came through the roof and destroyed the carpet.

to centralize – to make the national government more powerful than smaller pieces of government within the country; to have many offices and services in a central location instead of spreading them out over a larger area

* Would it be better to centralize our operations and have everyone work in one place, or should we continue to have offices in each state?

eventually – after a long period of time

* At first they didn't like our idea, but eventually, they agreed that we were right.

to be behind (something) – to support something; to think that something is a good idea and do and say things so that it will succeed

* This plan won't work if nobody is behind it.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.

Answer:

- (James) Madison
- (Alexander) Hamilton
- (John) Jay
- Publius

Explanation:

After the Constitution was written, it still had to be ratified (or approved) by the states. This meant that the people in each state had to vote **in favor of** (or for) the Constitution. The Federalists were a large group of people who supported the Constitution. The Antifederalists were a large group of people who did not like the Constitution. These two groups tried to **influence** (or affect) people's opinions, trying to get them to vote for or against the Constitution.

One of the main ways that these groups tried to influence **public opinion** (or the way that most people think about something) was by writing **essays** (or short written documents or articles) and publishing them in newspapers. The Federalists wrote some very well-known essays called the Federalist Papers. These were 85 essays that were **published** (or printed) with the **pseudonym** (or the fake name that a writer or a group of writers use) of Publius.

Actually, Publius was a pseudonym for three people: James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay. James Madison became the fourth U.S. president and he is often called the father (or creator) of the Constitution. Alexander Hamilton was the United States' first secretary of the treasury, which is the part of the government that handles the country's money. And John Jay was the country's first chief justice, which is the most important judge in the United States. All three men strongly believed that the Constitution would be able to **solve** (or fix) the country's problems.

The Federalist Papers are powerful (or strong) essays that describe the Constitution **in detail** (or with a lot of information). The essays also present (or show) many reasons why people should vote to ratify the Constitution. Today many people still **refer to** (or look at) the Federalist Papers when they need to **interpret** the Constitution (or to understand what it means). That is because the people who wrote the Federalist Papers participated in the Constitutional Convention (or the meeting where the Constitution was written), so they had an intimate (or very close) knowledge of why the Constitution was written the way that it was.



**Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100**

Glossary

67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.

in favor of (something) – in support of something; wanting something to happen
* Are you in favor of the government spending more money to improve public transportation?

to influence (something) – to affect something; to change something, especially how people think or act
* His writing has been influenced by the stories of Edgar Allen Poe.

public opinion – the way that most people think about something
* Our research shows that public opinion about religion has changed a lot over the past 50 years.

essay – a short written document or article
* All of the fourth-graders have to write an essay about what they did during their summer vacation.

to publish – to print a book, newspaper, or article; to have something that one has written made available to many people
* How many of your articles have been published in national magazines?

pseudonym – a fake name that a writer or a group of writers use because they don't want people to know that they wrote something
* Samuel Clemens was a famous American author, better known by his pseudonym, Mark Twain.

to solve – to find an answer or solution to something; to fix something
* Do you think we'll ever be able to solve the world's population problems?

in detail – with a lot of specific information; not general
* This book talks about U.S. geography in detail.

to refer to (something) – to look at or read something, especially to find information when one is researching something else; to mention or give attention to something
* She referred to hundreds of academic journals when writing her book.

to interpret – to determine or decide what something means
* How did you interpret that dance performance?



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

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

Answer:

- U.S. diplomat
- Oldest member of the Constitutional Convention
- First Postmaster General of the United States
- Writer of “Poor Richard’s Almanac”
- Started the first free libraries

Explanation:

“Early to bed, early to rise (or get up) makes a man healthy, wealthy (or rich), and wise (or intelligent).” This was just one of the many **quotes** (or famous phrases) of a man named Benjamin Franklin that are still popular today. Benjamin Franklin, who lived from 1706 to 1790, was one of the most famous Founding Fathers (or the men who were very important in creating the United States).

Benjamin Franklin is famous for many things. He was a U.S. **diplomat**, which is a person who represents his or her government in another country. Benjamin Franklin was the U.S. diplomat to France. He got the French to send guns and other things to the Americans while they fought for their independence (or freedom) from Britain.

Benjamin Franklin was also the first U.S. **postmaster general** (or the person who makes sure that the mail gets delivered within the United States). Later in life, Benjamin Franklin participated in the Constitutional Convention (or the meetings to write the country’s most important legal document, the Constitution). At 79 years old, he was the oldest member there.

Benjamin Franklin loved books. He wrote a popular book called Poor Richard’s Almanac. This book was printed every year and had many different kinds of information, including the weather, a calendar, poems, and more. Benjamin Franklin made a lot of money by printing Poor Richard’s Almanac and many other books. At that time, books were very expensive and very few people could buy books. So Benjamin Franklin had the idea to create a free **library**, or a building that would have many books that people could read without having to buy the books. America’s first library opened in 1731 and soon they became very popular all over the country.

Benjamin Franklin is also very well-known for his **inventions** (or tools and machines that are created for the first time). For example, he created **bifocals** (or glasses that has two types of glass in them: one that helps people see things that are close, and one that helps people see things that are far away). He also did many **experiments** (or scientific tests) on electricity.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

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

quote – a famous phrase; something that a person said or wrote that has been repeated many times by many other people

* The President's most famous quote is probably his promise of "no new taxes."

diplomat – a person who represents his or her government in another country

* How many times has the U.S. President met with Brazilian diplomats in the past four years?

postmaster general – the person who is responsible for the organization that delivers mail to homes and businesses within the United States

* The postmaster general said that the price of stamps will increase in March.

almanac – a book that is published every year and has a lot of information, including useful dates and numbers

* Dad bought a copy of a sport almanac that lists scores for all of the major games that were played last year.

library – a building that has many books that people can read without having to buy the books

* Ross didn't want to buy the new book because it was too expensive, so he borrowed it from the library instead.

invention – something that is made for the first time because no one else had thought of it before

* The invention of cars changed transportation forever.

bifocals – glasses that has two types of glass in them: one that helps people see things that are close, and one that helps people see things that are far away

* Many people have to start wearing bifocals as they get older.

experiment – a scientific test; a methodical test to see if something will do what thinks it will do

* The scientists are conducting experiments on rats to see how certain chemicals affect their skin.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

69. Who is the “Father of Our Country”?

Answer:

(George) Washington

Explanation:

There were many great men among the Founding Fathers (or the people who helped to create the United States), but only one of them is called the “Father of our Country.” His name was George Washington, and although he is best known for having been the first president of the United States, he also did many other things to **merit** (or deserve) the title of “Father of our Country.”

Born in Virginia in 1732, George Washington was always very interested in the **military**, which are organizations with soldiers that fight for the country’s freedom. He was a very well-respected **colonel** (or an important leader in the military) and he fought many **battles** (or smaller fights in a war) during the French and Indian War.

When the new United States **declared** (or officially stated or told others of) its independence (or freedom) from Britain, George Washington became the **commander-in-chief** (or top leader of the military) in the Revolutionary War between Britain and America. He helped the United States win the war and **secure** (or get) its freedom.

When the war ended in 1783, Washington was tired of fighting. He wanted to return to his home in Virginia and work on his plantation (or big farm). However, once he was there, he began to understand that there were many problems with the Articles of Confederation (or the legal document that existed before the Constitution). He decided to help the other Founding Fathers create a new legal document for the country and went to participate in the Constitutional Convention. The other members of the Constitutional Convention **unanimously** voted (or all voted in agreement) to make him the president of the Convention. The Constitution was written under his leadership in 1787. Just two years later, in 1789, George Washington became the first president of the United States.

George Washington had a major (or very important) influence (or effect) on the United States as the country was developing. That is why he is often called the “Father of our Country.”



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

69. Who is the “Father of Our Country”?

to merit – to deserve something; to be worthy of something

* Vicky merits a college scholarship because she has always been a good student and athlete in high school.

military – the people and organizations who fight for a country, usually to protect it

* Do you have any relatives in the military?

colonel – an important leader in the military

* There are not many women who reach the rank of colonel in the U.S. military.

battle – a fight in a war

* The Battle of Bunker Hill was one of the most famous battles in the American Revolutionary War.

to declare – to officially state that something is true; to tell other people that something is true or has been decided

* In 1983, the U.S. government declared Martin Luther King, Jr. Day to be a national holiday.

commander-in-chief – the person who leads a country's military (in the United States, this is the president)

* The commander-in-chief can decide whether soldiers should go into war zones.

to secure (something) – to succeed in getting something, especially if it is difficult or rare

* I want to secure your promise that you will never do that again.

unanimously – with everyone in agreement; with everyone making the same decision

* The students unanimously decided to use some of their money for an end-of-the-year party.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

70. Who was the first President?

Answer:

(George) Washington

Explanation:

Starting a new job is always difficult because you're doing many things for the first time. But starting a job that is new and has never existed before is even more difficult because no one has ever done the things that you're being asked to do. No one can tell you how to do it because no one has that experience. This is similar to what happened to the first president of the United States, George Washington.

George Washington was **unanimously** elected to be the first U.S. president, meaning that no one voted against him. Once this happened, everything that George Washington did became a **precedent** (or something that is used as an example for how people should behave in the future). Many of the things that George Washington did have become **standard** (or unchanging) for all U.S. presidents. For example, he chose to be called "Mr. President," and all U.S. presidents have been called that ever since.

Throughout his time as president, George Washington travelled to many different states, working hard to make sure that each state felt like an important part of the new country. He listened carefully to the advice (or ideas and suggestions) of other people before he made decisions as president. He was very careful to **avoid** (or not have) war with France or Britain.

Many people wanted George Washington to be president for three four-year terms (which would be a total of 12 years as president), but he **declined** (or said no). This set (or created) the precedent that presidents could serve (or work) for only two terms. Only one president was elected to more than two terms, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Today George Washington's **portrait** (which is a painting or drawing of him) is on the United States' one-dollar **bills** (or pieces of paper money) and **quarters** (or pieces of metal worth 25 cents). There is also a tall **monument** (or something that is built to remember a person or place) to George Washington in Washington, DC.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

70. Who was the first President?

unanimously – with everyone in agreement; with everyone making the same decision

* The city council members unanimously agreed to create a new city park.

precedent – something that was done in the past and is used as a reason for doing things the same way later

* If we buy our children candy at the store, we'll set a bad precedent for all future trips to the store, because they'll always want more candy.

standard – unchanging; the same every time

* A computer is now standard equipment for college students.

to avoid – to do something so that something else does not happen; to find a way to prevent something from happening

* She avoided an argument by changing the subject.

to decline – to say no; to decide not to have, do, or accept something

* She declined his invitation to the party, saying that she would be busy that night.

portrait – a painting or drawing of a person

* Portraits were more common before there were cameras.

bill – a piece of paper money; money that is printed on paper

* Could you please give me four \$5 bills for this \$20 bill?

quarter – a coin (a piece of money made from metal) worth 25 cents

* I need some quarters to use the public telephone.

monument – a building, statue, or something else that is built to remember an important person or event

* The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC was built to remember the Americans who died while fighting in the Vietnam War.



Introduction to the United States
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B: 1800s

71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?

Answer:

- The Louisiana Territory
- Louisiana

Explanation:

In the late 1700s, New Orleans was one of the United States' most important **ports**, since it was a city next to the water where ships or large boats could come and go. The United States used New Orleans to **transport** (or move) food and other products, but the city didn't belong to the U.S. New Orleans first belonged to Spain and then to France. This was a problem for the United States, because if those other countries decided to **block** (or not allow) America's access to New Orleans, the country wouldn't be able to send and receive the things it wanted to buy and sell.

So, when Thomas Jefferson was president, the United States **negotiated** (or reached an agreement) with France to buy New Orleans. The negotiators were prepared (or ready) to buy New Orleans for \$10 million. Imagine how surprised they were when the French government offered to sell the entire (or whole) area, a much, much bigger area than just New Orleans known as the Louisiana **Territory**, for just \$15 million. This area was almost 830,000 square miles! This was much more land than the U.S. had **intended** (or planned) to buy, but the opportunity was too good to **pass up** (or not buy).

The territory was bought in 1803 and the **transaction** (or sale) became known as the Louisiana Purchase. The Louisiana Territory was larger than the whole United States at that time. Today the area is almost one-fourth (or 25%) of the United States, covering 15 states and part of Canada.

Most of the Louisiana Territory was **uncharted** land when it was bought, meaning that it was land that no one had explored (or traveled to and knew very much about). It was also home for many Native Americans who were not involved in the transaction and did not even know about the purchase. The United States and France had agreed that the U.S. would own the land, but the U.S. would spend the next years fighting the Native Americans there to decide who would actually get to use the land.



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Glossary

71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?

port – a city next to the water where boats can come and go, delivering and picking up products

* The Port of Seattle is one of the busiest ports in North America.

to transport (something) – to move things from one place to another, usually over a large distance

* Is corn transported in trucks or trains?

to block (something) – to not allow something to happen; to prevent something from happening

* The theater uses an electronic device that blocks cell phone signals so that people can't talk on their phones during performances.

to negotiate – to discuss something, trying to get the other person or organization to agree to what one wants

* In the United States, people are expected to negotiate the price when they buy a car.

territory – an area of land that belongs to the United States but is not a state

* Many early Americans went to the Oregon Territory to find gold and to hunt.

to intend – to plan to do something

* Takhiro was just being careless when speaking and never intended to hurt your feelings.

to pass up – to decide not do something; to miss an opportunity to do something

* The price was too good to pass up, so she bought four bottles of shampoo, even though she didn't really need that much.

transaction – a sale; an exchange of money between a buyer and seller

* How many transactions does your store have on a normal day?

uncharted – unexplored; not known in very much detail; unfamiliar

* When Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic Ocean, North and South America were uncharted areas.



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72. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.

Answer:

- War of 1812
- Mexican-American War
- Civil War
- Spanish-American War

Explanation:

When Americans are asked about wars that the United States fought in during the 1800s, they often think of the Civil War. The Civil War was the war in which Americans fought each other, with northern states fighting against southern states. But there were three other important wars in the 1800s. These were the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the Spanish-American War.

The War of 1812 is often called the forgotten war because few people remember it well or know very much about it. The War of 1812 **lasted** (or continued) from 1812 to 1815 while the United States fought against Great Britain, Ireland, and its colonies (or areas of land belonging to those countries) in what is now Canada. One of the **causes** of the war (or one of the reasons why the war happened) was that Americans were **upset** (or angry) about Great Britain's way of **trading** (or buying and selling things internationally). Another reason was that Americans thought that the British government was helping Native Americans fight against the Americans who wanted their land. More than 2,000 American **soldiers** (or people who fought in the war) died.

The Mexican-American War was fought from 1846 to 1848. This war started after Texas **seceded** from Mexico (or stopped being a part of Mexico) and became part of the United States. Mexico didn't want this to happen and fought to **get back** the area, or to have it returned to Mexico. The **treaty** (or international agreement) that was signed at the end of the war gave the United States all of Texas, as well as a lot of other land, which includes all of California, Nevada, and Utah.

Finally, the Spanish-American War was a short war fought for four months in 1898 between the United States and Spain. When the war began, Cuba belonged to Spain and Americans wanted to help Cuba become independent (or free). The United States won quickly. The treaty that ended the war gave the United States control of Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico.



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Glossary

72. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.

to last – to continue for a period of time; a time period from beginning to end

* The conference lasted all day.

cause – a reason why something happens

* One cause of childhood deaths is poor nutrition.

upset – angry; mad

* Olive was very upset when she found out that her son had lied to her.

to trade – to buy and sell things, usually between countries or states

* Which countries does the United States trade with most often?

soldier – a person who fights in the military; a person who fights in the war

* Their daughter is a soldier and she often writes to them about the war.

to secede – for one area of land to stop being a part of a country and become independent

* Some people think that northern California should secede from the rest of the state and form a new state.

to get back (something) – to have something returned

* How are you going to get back all of the money that you've loaned to your cousin?

treaty – an international agreement; an agreement between different countries

* The countries signed a treaty to limit their nuclear weapons.



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73. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.

Answer:

- The Civil War
- The War between the States

Explanation:

Do you know which war has been the **deadliest** war for the United States (or the war that has had the most American deaths)? It was the Civil War, where Americans fought against each other. From 1861 to 1865, northern states fought against southern states, sometimes with family members fighting against each other. About 620,000 **soldiers** (or people who fight in a war) died.

The northern states were called “the Union” and were led by President Abraham Lincoln. The Union was fighting against 11 states in the south that had **seceded** from the United States (or stopped being a part of the country). They called themselves the Confederate States of America, or sometimes just the Confederacy, and were led by a man named Jefferson Davis.

The Confederacy **claimed** its independence, or said that it was no longer part of the United States, but no other countries **recognized its independence**, meaning that no other countries treated it like a new country, even though some British and French companies did sell **military supplies** (or things to fight with, such as guns) to the Confederacy. The United States treated the Confederacy as a **rebellion** (or an organized effort to change the leadership of a country).

Although the Confederacy did not exist for very long, it did have an organized government. Jefferson Davis was elected to be the president and he had a full **cabinet**, or a group of people to give him ideas and suggestions for the government and to run important government offices. The Confederacy also had its own flag, which is sometimes called the “Navy Jack.” Although most people today call it simply the Confederate flag.

Even though the Confederacy lost the war and the 11 states **rejoined** the United States (or became part of the country again), many of the people who live in the south are still proud of the Confederacy. Sometimes you can see the Confederate flag flying in the southern United States.



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Glossary

73. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.

deadliest – with the highest number of deaths

* Snakes and frogs are some of the deadliest animals on Earth.

soldier – a person who fights in the military; a person who fights in a war

* Sometimes soldiers see their best friends die in war.

to secede – for one area of land to stop being a part of a country and become independent

* Do you think a state will ever secede from the United States?

to claim – to say that something is true, especially if other people do not believe it or if one does not have proof

* He claims that he has seen aliens from other planets, but I don't believe it.

to recognize (a country's) independence – to agree that a new country has been created and treat an area of land as a new country instead of as part of another country

* Which countries were the first ones to recognize our independence?

military supplies – things that are needed to fight a war, like guns

* Without military supplies, an army is useless.

rebellion – an organized effort to change the leadership of a country

* If a government doesn't take good care of its people, there will be a rebellion.

cabinet – a group of people who give advice, information, and ideas to the U.S. president on many important issues

* Some presidents choose not to listen to their cabinet.

to rejoin (something) – to become part of something again; to become part of something that one used to be a part of

* I thought you stopped being a member of our club. When did you rejoin?



Introduction to the United States
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74. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.

Answer:

- Slavery
- Economic reasons
- States' rights

Explanation:

During the 1800s, the United States grew very quickly, but it did not grow in the same way in all places. Over time, there were more and more differences between the northern states and the southern states. These differences **eventually** (or in the end) led to the Civil War, which was a war where Americans fought against each other from 1861 to 1865. The most important differences that led to the Civil War were slavery, the economy, and states' rights.

Slavery (or the practice of owning people and forcing them to work without paying them) was more **common** (or usual and normal) in the southern states than in the northern states. The north had many small, family-owned farms and enough people to work on them. But in the south, there were fewer people. Most of the farms were very large and the owners needed slaves to do the work. Slaves were a **critical** (or very important) part of how the south made money, but people in the north were beginning to think that slavery was **immoral** (or wrong) and wanted to make it illegal (or against the law). This made the southern states afraid and angry and they wanted to secede from (or leave) the United States and create their own country.

There were also economic (or business and money) reasons for the Civil War. The southern states had many plantations (or large farms). These plantations were **dependent** on (or needed) agriculture, which included farming and raising animals for food. For the south to have a strong economy, it needed plantations to make money. The northern states had larger and more developed cities. Many of the people in the northern states made money from **manufacturing** (or making things to sell) and **trading** (or selling things to other countries). Some historians (or people who study things that happened in the past) believe that these economic differences were a **cause** of the Civil War (or one of the reasons for the Civil War).

Finally, states' **rights** (or the ability to do and have certain things) were another problem that led to the Civil War. The population (or the number of people) in the northern states was growing very quickly, with a lot of **immigration** (or people coming from other countries to live there). In the south, the population was growing more slowly. Southern states were afraid that they would lose their rights because the northern states would have more representation in the federal government. Southern states were also worried that the federal (or national) government would become too strong, taking power away from the states. This was the third major cause of the Civil War.



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Glossary

74. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.

eventually – after a long period of time

* I have delayed learning how to fix a car for a long time, but I'll learn to do it eventually to save money on repairs.

common – usual and normal; not rare

* In the United States, it is common for a family to have two or more cars.

critical – very important and significant

* Math skills are critical for accountants.

immoral – wrong; against the standards of society

* Many people believe that it is immoral to kill for any reason.

to be dependent on (something) – to need something in order to work or function properly

* Florida's economy is dependent on tourism.

to manufacture – to make things to sell

* Three of the largest companies in this country manufacture cars.

to trade – to buy and sell things, usually between countries or states

* Which countries does the United States trade cotton with?

cause – a reason why something happens

* The increase in the number of cars is one of the causes of global warming.

right – the power or ability to do something; a freedom

* Members of our organization believe that all women should have the right to go to school.

immigration – the process of people coming to a country to live there, even though they weren't born there

* In recent years, the United States has had a lot of immigration from Central and South America.



Introduction to the United States
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75. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?

Answer:

- Freed the slaves (Emancipation Proclamation)
- Saved (or preserved) the Union
- Led the United States during the Civil War

Explanation:

Being the president of the United States is always a difficult and dangerous job, but it is **especially so** (or even more so) when there is a **civil war** and two or more parts of one country are fighting against each other. This was the experience of Abraham Lincoln, who was the 16th president of the United States.

Abraham Lincoln believed that slavery (or the practice of owning other people and making them work without paying them) was wrong and he worked hard to make slavery illegal (or against the law) in the United States. This was one of the biggest reasons that the United States had its Civil War. The northern and southern states fought **bitterly** (or in a very serious and negative way) against each other and it seemed like the United States could not be **united** anymore (or with all the states working together in one country). But Abraham Lincoln led the United States during the Civil War and he was able to **preserve** (or save) the Union when many people thought it wasn't possible.

Abraham Lincoln also made the **Emancipation Proclamation**, an official government document that **freed** the slaves and made slavery illegal (or against the law). This made many people in the north happy, but it made many people in the south angry. In fact, the Emancipation Proclamation made some people so angry that they began to plan Abraham Lincoln's **assassination** (or the murder of a country's leader).

On April 14, 1865, President Lincoln and his wife were watching a play (or theater performance) at Ford's Theater in Washington, DC. A man named John Wilkes Booth was in the theater, too, and he had a gun. He shot President Lincoln. The president died the next morning. He was the first U.S. president to be assassinated. People in the northern part of the country **mourned his loss** (or felt sad that he had died), but some of the people in the south celebrated his death. Today he is remembered as a great president who helped the country stay together in very, very difficult times.



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Glossary

75. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?

especially so – even more so; very much true

* Dan said, “I don't think teenagers should use drugs, and that's especially so when I think about my own children.”

civil war – a war where two or more parts of one country are fighting against each other

* In a civil war, sometimes brothers and sisters fight against each other.

bitterly – in a very strong, negative, and unhappy way

* The two cousins argued bitterly while they were growing up, but now they are good friends.

united – made of one piece, without many separate parts; joined

* How many countries are united in the European Union?

to preserve (something) – to be able to save something; to be able to protect something

* We took photographs to preserve the memories of our vacation.

Emancipation Proclamation – a U.S. government document that made it against the law to own other people as slaves

* The Emancipation Proclamation gave thousands of slaves their freedom.

to free (someone) – to do something so that a person is no longer a slave; to let someone out of jail or prison; to give someone freedom

* Who freed the dangerous prisoners from the city jail?

assassination – the murder of a country's leader or another important person

* How many times has there been an assassination of a U.S. president?

to mourn (one's) loss – to feel very sad that someone has died

* Their mother died last year, and they are still mourning their loss.



Introduction to the United States
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76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

Answer:

- Freed the slaves
- Freed slaves in the Confederacy
- Freed slaves in the Confederate states
- Freed slaves in most Southern states

Explanation:

In 1860, there were approximately four million slaves (or people who are owned and have to work without being paid) in the United States. By 1865, there were no slaves because they had all been given freedom. Their freedom came from President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

Abraham Lincoln's **proclamation** (or public announcement) **emancipated** (or gave freedom to) all slaves in the United States. The Emancipation Proclamation, which was made in 1863, made slavery illegal or not legal. This was a very **risky** decision, which means that it was a decision that could have caused a lot of trouble for Abraham Lincoln. The country was being **torn in two** (or strongly divided) between the northern states where slavery was illegal and the southern states where there were still many slaves.

Abolitionists (or people who wanted slavery to end) had been asking Abraham Lincoln to make slavery illegal for a long time. But he had to act **cautiously** (or slowly and very carefully). He knew that the political decision would be very risky. In fact, he did not make the Emancipation Proclamation until the Civil War (or the war between America's northern and southern states) had already started.

The Emancipation Proclamation made slavery illegal in the Union (or the northern states), but the Confederacy (or southern states) was no longer listening to the President of the United States at that time. Slavery didn't become illegal in those southern states until they became part of the United States again after the northern states won the Civil War. Some of the southern states made slavery illegal right away, but others did it **gradually** (or a little bit at a time). Two states, Delaware and Kentucky, did not emancipate their slaves until 1865.

When the Emancipation Proclamation was read aloud, many slaves **wept** (or cried) with happiness. They were happy to have their freedom and to know that their children would be free. However, it would be many years before they would begin to be treated equally (or in the same way) as white Americans. Even today there is still **discrimination** (or unfair treatment) against some African Americans or black Americans.



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Glossary

76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

proclamation – a public announcement; an official announcement said to many people

* The king made a proclamation that everyone should give one-half of their wealth to him.

to emancipate – to give freedom to someone; to do something so that someone is no longer a slave

* Some African Americans didn't know what to do after they were emancipated because they had always been slaves.

risky – with many dangers; with a possibility for failure; dangerous* Opening your own business is risky because you might lose all of your money.

torn in two – strongly divided; broken into two parts

* When Hans asked her to marry him and move away, she was torn in two by her love for him and her desire to stay where she was.

abolitionist – a person who wanted slavery to end; a person who worked to change the laws to make slavery illegal (against the law)

* John Brown was a white abolitionist who tried to get black slaves in Virginia to fight for their freedom.

cautiously – slowly and very carefully

* Sheila walked cautiously in the dark because she didn't want to fall down.

gradually – a little bit at a time; happening or changing slowly

* The doctor said that it is best to lose weight gradually, no more than two pounds per week.

to weep – to cry

* The movie was so sad and beautiful that it made me weep.

discrimination – unfair treatment, usually because of a person's age, race (skin color), gender (sex), or religion

* In the United States, many older people say that they cannot get good jobs because of age discrimination.



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77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?

Answer:

- Fought for women's rights
- Fought for civil rights

Explanation:

Sometimes the United States makes special **coins** (or pieces of money made out of metal) that **honor** (or give special recognition or importance to) people in American history. Our one-dollar coin has a picture of Susan B. Anthony on it. Susan B. Anthony was famous because she fought for women's rights, which would allow women to do the same things that men were allowed to do. Specifically, she fought for **suffrage** (or the right to vote) for women.

Susan B. Anthony was born in 1820. She was part of the **temperance movement**, which was a group of people who believed that people should drink very little or no alcohol. She wanted to change the laws about selling and using alcohol, but women were not allowed to vote at that time. This **frustrated** her, or made her feel angry because it was unfair. So she began to fight for women's right to vote.

Susan often spoke to the public (or the people in a country) about why it was important for women to vote. She also wrote a weekly **journal** (or magazine) about it. In 1872, she voted in the presidential election even though it was illegal, and she was **arrested** (or forced to go to jail) for it.

Susan also fought for other **civil rights** (or things that all people should be allowed to do). She fought against slavery and for the rights of black people. She also fought for other women's rights, like the right to own **property**, which included lands or buildings, and women's right to be paid well for working outside the home.

Susan was successful in getting women the right to vote, but she never knew it. Susan died 14 years before women actually got the right to vote. This happened in 1920, when the 19th Amendment (or change in law) to the U.S. Constitution was made. Susan never got to see the results of her work, but most historians **attribute** the approval of the 19th Amendment to her work, meaning that they think her work was one of the important reasons why the 19th Amendment was approved.



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Glossary

77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?

coin – a piece of money made from metal; a small, round piece of metal that is used as money

* A nickel is a five-cent coin.

to honor (someone or something) – to give special recognition or importance to someone or something

* The author was honored with one of the most prestigious writing awards.

suffrage – the right to vote; the freedom to be allowed to vote

* Which Americans got suffrage first: women or African Americans?

temperance movement – the actions of a group of people who believed that people should drink very little or no alcohol

* During the temperance movement, people tried to get others to stop drinking alcohol.

to frustrate (someone) – to make someone feel angry because something is not happening the way one wants it to happen

* It frustrated Maurizio when he could not understand what the teacher was saying.

journal – a magazine, usually published by an organization; a publication with many articles in it

* Have you ever read the Journal of the National Grants Management Association?

to be arrested – to be forced to go to jail by the police because one has done something against the law

* The man was arrested for drunk driving.

civil rights – the rights that citizens have to social and political freedom and equality, and having the same opportunities as all other citizens

* Some say that Americans have more civil rights than people in many other countries.

property – land, buildings, and other things that are owned by a person

* They own a house and some other property in Lincoln City.

to attribute (something) to (something) – to say why something happened; to say what the reason is for something

* She attributes her happiness to having a loving her family.



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C: Recent American History and Other Important Historical Information

78. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.

Answer:

- World War I
- World War II
- Korean War
- Vietnam War
- (Persian) Gulf War

Explanation:

World War I, which was fought from 1914 to 1918, was called the War to End All Wars. People thought that it was such a big war that no other wars would need to be fought. **Obviously** (or clearly), this was wrong.

In the 1900s, the United States fought in five wars. After World War I, the United States fought in World War II. The United States didn't want to fight in that war, but when the Japanese **bombed** (or dropped weapons or things that would explode on) Pearl Harbor, the country decided that it was time to join the war against Japan, Germany, and Italy.

The next war that the United States fought in during the 1900s was the Korean War between 1950 and 1953. North Korea and South Korea were fighting against each other, mostly because North Korea had a communist government and South Korea did not. Soon the United States and the Soviet Union became involved as an **extension** (or an additional part) of their **Cold War**, which was the period of time from the 1940s to the 1990s when the United States and the Soviet Union had many political problems with each other.

After the Korean War, the United States fought in the Vietnam War from 1959 to 1975. As in the Korean War, the United States was trying to **prevent** Vietnam from having a communist government, or not let the country have a communist government. The war was very **unpopular** in the United States, meaning that many people didn't want the United States to fight this war. Many U.S. soldiers (or the people who fought in the war) died. In the end, the United States lost and Vietnam became a communist country.

Finally, the last war fought by the United States in the 1900s was the Persian Gulf War, which is sometimes just called the Gulf War. This war was fought between Iraq and a **coalition** (or group that works together) of 34 countries, but the United States and the United Kingdom were the leaders. The United States' reason for fighting in the war was to help the country of Kuwait, which had been **invaded** by Iraqi soldiers, which means that Iraqis had taken control of the country without the Kuwaitis' permission. However, many Americans think that the Gulf War was really about getting enough oil for the United States and the other coalition countries to use.



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Glossary

78. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.

obviously – clearly; easily seen and understood

* Some people thought that higher gas prices would make American stop driving, but obviously that isn't what has happened.

to bomb (a place) – to drop weapons or things that will explode over a building or an area of land

* The pilots bombed the other country's airports.

extension – an additional part of something; an additional period of time of something

* The city is planning an extension of its subway to reach more areas outside the city.

Cold War – the period of time from the 1940s to the 1990s when the United States and the Soviet Union had many political problems with each other

* During the Cold War, many Americans were scared that the Russians would send a nuclear bomb to the United States.

to prevent – to make something impossible; to make something else not be able to happen

* You can't prevent a cold, but you can make it less likely by eating well and washing your hands often.

unpopular – not popular; not liked by very many people

* What did the president do to make himself so unpopular among the people who voted for him?

coalition – a group of people or organizations that work together

* This group is a coalition of nonprofit organizations that try to improve their communities.

to invade – to take control of a country without the permission of the people who live there

* What would we do if aliens invaded our country from another planet?



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79. Who was President during World War I?

Answer:

(Woodrow) Wilson

Explanation:

When Woodrow Wilson became the 28th president of the United States in 1912, he **had no idea** (or absolutely did not know) that he would have to lead the country through the first **global** war, or a war that affected (or changed or influenced) the whole world. World War I began in 1914 and it affected the rest of his presidency (or the time when he was president).

At first, President Wilson wanted the United States to be as **neutral** as possible, not fighting on either side of the war. However, the Germans kept **attacking** (or fighting) with **submarines**, which are large boats that travel under the water, where they can't be seen. This made President Wilson decide to enter the war.

He started the United States' first real **draft** in 1917. The draft made young American men fight in the army whether they wanted to or not. To get money for the war, President Wilson helped the United States make billions of dollars by selling Liberty **Bonds**, which were pieces of paper that people bought from the government with the promise that the government would give them even more money on a certain day in the future. President Wilson also started the **income tax**, which makes Americans pay a percentage of all the money they receive for working to the U.S. government.

As World War I ended, President Wilson became heavily (or very much) involved in the **peace talks**, which are discussions that should lead to the end of a war so that all countries are satisfied. He led the **negotiations** (or discussions where people or countries agree on what they want) with Germany and helped to create the peace treaties (or agreements between countries).

In 1919, President Wilson received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in trying to start the League of Nations. The League of Nations was an international organization that was supposed to bring peace to the world and prevent other wars from being fought in the future.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

79. Who was President during World War I?

to have no idea – to absolutely not know; to be completely surprised by something

* He had no idea that we were planning a surprise birthday party for him.

global – relating to the whole planet; relating to everyone on Earth

* Climate change is a global issue because it affects all people in all countries.

neutral – not fighting on either side of a war; not having an opinion in favor of or against something; not supporting either side of an argument

* The children have learned to stay neutral whenever their parents fight.

to attack – to fight; to do something to hurt a person or a place

* The cats were afraid that the dog would attack and decided to run away as quickly as possible.

submarine – a large boat that travels under the water where it cannot be seen

* How deep in the ocean can a submarine go?

draft – the process of forcing young people to join the military during a war

* Keenan is too young for the draft, since high school students aren't expected to fight in the war.

bond – a piece of paper bought from the government with the promise that the government will give the buyer even more money on a certain day in the future

* My aunt is a banker and she says that I can make a little bit of money by buying bonds, but I could make more money by investing in the stock market.

income tax – money that is paid to the government based on how much money one makes each year

* Even with our tax laws, it isn't always the case that people who make more money pay higher income taxes.

peace talks – discussions that should lead to the end of a war so that all countries are satisfied

* Who led the peace talks with Germany and Japan at the end of World War II?

negotiation – a discussion where one tries to get the other person or organization to agree to what one wants

* The renters are in negotiations with the owner of the apartment building because they want the building to be painted.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?

Answer:

(Franklin) Roosevelt

Explanation:

When Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States, he said, “the only thing we have to fear (or be afraid of) is fear itself.” This phrase became very well known and gave **inspiration** (or hope) to millions of Americans who were living in very difficult times. Roosevelt became president in 1933 during the **Great Depression**, which was a period of time when the U.S. economy was doing very poorly.

President Roosevelt did many things to help Americans during the Great Depression. He had a plan called the New Deal that helped the **unemployed** (or people who couldn’t find jobs), made the banking system better, and helped to strengthen the economy.

Then, just when the Great Depression was ending and the U.S. economy was getting better, World War II began and President Roosevelt had many new **challenges** (or things that are difficult to do). He started **rationing**, letting people have only small amounts of things that were also needed by the army. He also worked to **expand** (or make bigger) the **manufacturing industry** (or the part of the economy that makes things) in the United States. He approved the law that created a **minimum wage**, which is the smallest amount of money that a person can be paid for each hour of work.

President Roosevelt served (or worked as president) for 12 years, from 1933 to 1945. He was the only U.S. President who has served more than two terms (or two four-year periods). After his presidency, the 22nd Amendment (or change to the law) to the U.S. Constitution was made, so that no president could serve more than two terms.

He was a very strong president, yet his body was **weak** (or not strong). President Roosevelt was almost **paralyzed** (or unable to move) in the lower part of his body. He used a wheelchair, which is a special chair on wheels, but he almost never let people see him using it.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?

inspiration – something that one wants to do, or an exciting reason for wanting to do something good; having your mind feel excited to do something, especially something creative

* He says that his wife is his inspiration for painting.

Great Depression – a period of time in the 1930s when the U.S. economy was doing very poorly

* During the Great Depression, many American families were worried that they didn't have enough money to buy food.

unemployed – people who cannot get a job

* The U.S. government gives the unemployed some money to help them while they are looking for a job.

challenge – something that is difficult to do, but also may be exciting

* Climbing Mount McKinley in Alaska, one of the tallest mountains on Earth, is a great physical challenge.

to ration – to allow people to have or to buy only a small amount of something because there is not enough of it for everyone

* When was the last time that gasoline was rationed in the United States?

to expand – to make something bigger or to make it cover a larger area

* The university wants to expand its foreign language courses to include Japanese, Arabic, and Swahili.

manufacturing industry – the part of the economy that makes things for people to buy

* Car companies are part of the manufacturing industry.

minimum wage – the smallest amount of money that a person can be paid legally for one hour of work

* Many of the people who work at fast-food restaurants earn minimum wage.

weak – not strong; not having much power

* She's too weak to lift a twenty-pound bag of flour!

paralyzed – unable to move one's body

* After the car accident, Logan was paralyzed from his neck down.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

81. Who did the United States fight in World War II?

Answer:

Japan, Germany, and Italy

Explanation:

World War II, or the Second World War, was truly a global war, or a war that affected the whole world. Most of the powerful countries in the world were involved in the war in one of two **alliances** (or groups of countries that work together during a war): the Allies and the Axis. The Allies included the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR (which would later become Russia and other countries), France, and Poland. The Axis included Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Membership or participation in each of the alliances was **fluid**, meaning that it changed over time as some countries became part of the Allies and the Axis and other countries left them. The United States was a **late entrant** to the war, meaning that the U.S. was not one of the first countries in World War II, but began fighting later. Most of the people in the United States wanted the country to follow **isolationism**, or a type of government that does not get involved in foreign affairs, or things that are happening in other countries. However, on December 7, 1941, Americans **changed their mind**, or changed what they thought about isolationism.

The United States had a **naval base**, or a place where the country's military ships are kept, in a place called Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes **attacked** (or fought against) Pearl Harbor. The Japanese **bombed** (or dropped weapons that explode) on Pearl Harbor, destroying many U.S. ships and planes and killing almost 2,400 Americans.

The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor as a **preventative** measure, or something that might keep something else from happening. Although the United States wasn't fighting in the war yet, the Japanese knew that the United States might become involved. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor to try to make it impossible for the United States to enter the war. In fact, however, when they bombed Pearl Harbor, it was **the final push**, or the last thing that needed to happen, for the United States to decide to enter the war.

Glossary

81. Who did the United States fight in World War II?

alliance – a group of people, organizations, or countries that work together, especially during a war

* Which countries does the U.S. have an alliance with right now?



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

fluid – able to change over time; not always the same; likely to change

* The number of employees at that company is fluid, with more employees in the summer and fewer employees during the rest of the year.

late entrant – a person, country, business, or organization that started doing something later, after others were already doing it

* Late entrants in the technology industry have to work harder than their competitors to sell their products, because customers are already familiar with other companies' products.

isolationism – a way of running a government so that the country does not get involved in things that are happening in other countries

* The country's leaders believe in isolationism, so it doesn't help any other countries when they are in trouble.

to change (one's) mind – to change one's opinion about something; to begin thinking about something differently

* At first Hiroshi said that he didn't want to go with us, but then he changed his mind.

naval base – a place where a country's military ships are kept

* All of the soldiers are staying at the naval base until their ship can be fixed and they can sail again.

to attack – to fight; to do something to hurt a person or a place

* Our website is being attacked by someone who doesn't want others to read our blog.

to bomb (a place) – to drop weapons or things that will explode over a building or an area of land

* In general, countries try not to bomb hospitals and schools.

preventative – something that might keep something else from happening; something that avoids something else

* She drinks lots of orange juice because she thinks that getting a lot of vitamin C is a type of preventative healthcare.

final push – the last thing that needs be done so that something else can happen

* The runner was extremely tired, but he made one final push at the end and won the race.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?

Answer:

World War II

Explanation:

In 1952, a man became the president of the United States with a simple **slogan** (or phrase used in an election): “I like Ike.” Ike was a nickname (or a name that he liked to use), but his real name was Dwight David Eisenhower. He was one of the few **generals** (or military leaders) to become a U.S. president.

Eisenhower studied at West Point, which is a famous U.S. military **academy** (or school). He served (or worked in the military) in the United States and the Philippines. But his real military career (or job) began with World War II. After the Japanese attacked (or fought against) Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, Eisenhower went to Washington, DC where he helped to make important war plans against Japan and Germany. He then had more and more important **roles** (or jobs and responsibilities) in the U.S. army. In 1944 and 1945, General Eisenhower had command (or control) of all the Allied **forces**, which included all the soldiers from all the countries who were fighting against Japan, Germany, and Italy.

During the war, Eisenhower demonstrated (or showed) great **leadership**, which is the ability to make other people believe in him and follow him. When the war ended, Eisenhower was recognized (or seen) as a **war hero**, or someone who fought very well and very bravely in a war. Many Americans **admired** him because they thought he had done many good things for his country and the world, helping to end a horrible war. Because so many Americans admired him, he was elected (or chosen as) president in 1952. He served as president from 1953 to 1961.

As the 34th president of the United States, Eisenhower did many important things. He helped to build many **interstate highways**, which are long roads where cars can drive very quickly from one state to another. He also supported the **integration** of America’s schools, making sure that African American (or black) and white children could study at the same schools, even though the idea was very unpopular at the time. Alaska and Hawaii became states while he was serving (or working) as president.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?

slogan – a phrase that many people repeat as a message about what they want to do or change

* Are you familiar with our company's new slogan: "You talk, we listen"?

general – a military leader

* General Robert E. Lee was a southern general during the Civil War.

academy – a school for a specific purpose or field of study

* Veronica studies violin at the music academy.

role – a position; a job; a function

* He plays an important role in the project management team.

forces – the military; the people and organizations that fight for a country, usually to protect it

* How many countries have sent forces to fight in the war?

leadership – direction and management from one person or a small group of people; the ability to make other people believe in oneself and follow oneself

* People are attracted to and pleased with Hilbert's strong leadership.

war hero – a person who fought very well and very bravely in a war and is admired because of it

* He did many brave things during the war, and when he came back to the United States, he was a war hero.

to admire – to think that someone has done a good thing or is a good person and who is liked and respected for that reason

* I admire you for your honesty.

interstate highway – a long road without stoplights or stop signs where cars can drive very quickly from one state to another

* Interstate Highway 5 runs from southern California to northern Washington.

integration – the process of getting people of different races (skin color) to work and live together without problems

* Many Americans fought against the integration of their schools in the 1950s because they thought that black and white students should study separately.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?

Answer:

Communism

Explanation:

A war usually involves a lot of fighting and death. The Cold War, however, was different. The Cold War wasn't actually a war, but instead it was a very long period of **hostility** (or dislike) between the United States and the Soviet Union (or the part of the world that would later become Russia and other countries). The two countries disagreed on **ideology** (or ideas about how governments should work). The United States believed that democracies were the best governments. The Soviet Union believed that communism was best.

The Cold War began in the mid-1940s and didn't end until the early 1990s. During that time, the United States and the Soviet Union were the world's **superpowers** (or most powerful and richest countries). Many people were scared that the two superpowers would begin to actually fight each other, causing many deaths, but that never happened.

But there were many dangerous **threats** (or bad things that could have happened) during that time. The two superpowers **engaged** (or became involved) in a **nuclear arms race**. This was a period of time when both superpowers made a lot of nuclear arms (or weapons) like bombs. Each country wanted to have more nuclear weapons than the other country did. The superpowers spent a lot of money making these weapons and building **defense** to protect themselves from each other.

The United States was worried about the **spread** (or growth) of communism. The Soviet Union was helping other countries adopt (or begin to follow) communism. All those countries were said to be behind the Iron Curtain. When the Soviet Union began to be powerful in another country, the United States tried to stop the spread of communism there. At the same time, the Soviet Union sent its support to countries where there was a **communist movement** (or interest in becoming communist).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, the head (or leader) of the Soviet Union, began to have **diplomatic** discussions, or conversations between political leaders. These discussions eventually (or after a long period of time) led to the end of the Cold War.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?

hostility – dislike; unfriendliness and anger

* She has a lot of hostility toward her ex-husband, and her ex-husband feels the same way about her.

ideology – ideas and beliefs about how government or society should work

* He has an ideology of peace and believes that all wars are bad, no matter why they are fought.

superpower – one of the world's most powerful and richest countries

* Do most countries consider the United States one of the world's superpowers?

threat – a statement about a bad thing that will happen if something else does not happen

* The robber made a threat, saying that he would use his gun if the bank employee didn't give him \$5,000 immediately.

to engage in (something) – to become involved in something

* At the party, they engaged in a long discussion about politics and religion.

nuclear arms race – a period of time when the Soviet Union and the United States made a lot of nuclear bombs and scared each other with them

* The nuclear arms race was very expensive for both the Soviet Union and the United States because they made a lot of weapons that they didn't really want to use.

defense – protection from a person or country that wants to hurt oneself

* Shaun wants his daughter to learn karate as a defense against being attacked when she goes off to college.

spread – growth; expansion; increase

* Public health scientists are worried about the spread of AIDS and other diseases.

communist movement – growing interest in becoming communist among many people

* When did the communist movement begin in Cuba?

diplomatic – careful conversations between political leaders representing different countries

* In general, the United States has good diplomatic relations with Canada.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?

Answer:

The civil rights (movement)

Explanation:

The U.S. Declaration of Independence says that “all men are created equal” (or the same), but in **reality** (or in real life), this isn’t really true. The United States has always **struggled** (or had problems) with **racial discrimination**, which means treating people differently and unfairly because of the color of their skin.

Racial discrimination is still a problem today, but it is less of a problem now than it used to be. In the early 1900s, blacks and other people who were not white couldn’t do many of the things that white people could do. For example, they were not allowed to drink out of the same **drinking fountains** (or places where people can drink water on the street) or use the same bathrooms as white people could. They also had to go to different schools and shop in different stores. They even had to ride in the back of busses, because only white people could sit in the front.

In 1955, a black woman named Rosa Parks was very tired of all these rules and she decided to sit in the front of a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, a city in the southern part of the United States. The driver **ordered** (or told) her to sit in the back, but she wouldn’t do it. This was an **act of civil disobedience**, because she was breaking the rules as a way to try to change those rules. She was **arrested** (or forced to go to jail) because of it.

The black community in Montgomery wanted to support (or help) Rosa Parks and fight for their rights. So they began to **boycott** the busses in Montgomery. This means that they refused to ride in busses because they were tired of having to sit in the back. Their boycott lasted for more than one year until the laws were changed. The bus companies lost a lot of money during the boycott. Many of the busses stopped running (or going on the streets).

Rosa Parks’ refusal or saying ‘no’ to sitting in the back of the bus became a famous story in the national news and began the **civil rights movement**, or the period of time when many people were working to have equal rights for whites and non-whites. Rosa Parks is sometimes called the “Mother of the Civil Rights Movement.”



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?

in reality – in real life; truthfully; not imaginary

* She told her employer that she knew how to use the computer program, but in reality, she had never even heard of it before.

to struggle with (something) – to have problems with something; to have difficulty doing or understanding something

* Mindy struggles with spelling long words in English.

racial discrimination – the practice of treating people differently and unfairly because of the color of their skin

* If a university has only white students, it probably has problems with racial discrimination.

drinking fountain – a place where people can drink water in public, such as on the street or in a building

* The little boy waited in line for his turn to drink out of the drinking fountain.

to order – to tell someone to do something

* The lieutenant ordered the soldier to run five miles.

act of civil disobedience – the practice of breaking a rule as a way to try to change the rules, usually because it is unfair

* Henry David Thoreau, an American writer, didn't pay taxes as an act of civil disobedience, because he didn't like the way the government spent its money.

to arrest – for the police to force someone to go to jail because he or she has done something against the law

* They were arrested for getting into a fight and causing a lot of damage.

to boycott – to stop using, doing, or buying something as a way to show that one doesn't like the way something is done

* Some Americans want to boycott things made in other countries, because they think the U.S. should buy only things that are made in America.

civil rights movement – the period of time in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States when many people were working to have equal rights for whites and non-whites

* Before the civil rights movement, African Americans had very few opportunities for good education and good jobs in the United States.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

Answer:

- Fought for civil rights
- Worked for equality for all Americans

Explanation:

One of the most famous **speeches** (or a presentation spoken to many people) in American History is "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King, Jr. He made the speech as part of the **civil rights movement**, or the period of time when many people were working to have equal rights for whites and non-whites. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a black leader of the civil rights movement, fighting for **equality** (or the same treatment) for all Americans whether they were black, white, or any other color.

On August 28, 1963, about 250,000 people participated in the "**March** on Washington for Freedom and Jobs," walking around Washington, DC to show how important freedom and jobs were to them. About 80% of the people were black. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his speech called "I have a **dream**" (or something that he wanted to see happen). Let's hear some of the most famous parts of the speech.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said:

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be **judged** (or evaluated) by the color of their skin, but by the content of their **character** (or their personality, or what they are like inside)."

In his speech, he also said:

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former (or previous) slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood."

"Let freedom **ring** (or be heard everywhere). And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring—when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet (or town), from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children.... will be able to **join hands** (or hold each other's hands) and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual (or song): "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

These are some of the important words that Martin Luther King, Jr. said that day. And these are still words that remind us (or help us remember) that there are a lot of things that must still change for the United States to have equality for all.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

speech – a presentation spoken to many people

* The company president gave a speech to all of the employees, explaining why he had decided to sell the company.

civil rights movement – the period of time in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States when many people were working to have equal rights for whites and non-whites

* We learned from our teacher that the civil rights movement also helped people with disabilities begin to get fair treatment in the workplace.

equality – the idea that everyone should be treated in the same way under the law

* If women had equality with men, they would receive the same amount of money for doing the same kind of work, but they don't.

march – an event where many people walk together down a street to support an idea or to show how they feel about something

* When the war began, people who didn't like it organized a march where they would all wear black clothes.

dream – something that one wants to see happen; a vision and a hope for the future

* His dream is that his daughter will become a doctor.

to judge – to evaluate; to decide whether something is good or bad

* My grandmother always said: "Try not to judge people by what they wear, but by what they say and do."

character – personality; what a person is like inside, not his or her physical appearance

* She has a warm, friendly character and everyone likes her.

to ring – to be heard over a great distance, usually when talking about bells

* The church bells ring every Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

to join hands – to hold one another's hands; to put another person's hand in one's own hand to show friendship, love, or respect

* At the beginning of the wedding, the priest asked the bride and groom to join hands.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001 in the United States?

Answer:

Terrorists attacked the United States.

Explanation:

Terrorism (or violence that is used against people to try to scare them) used to be something that Americans only read about in the newspaper. They knew that terrorists were dangerous (or could hurt them), but it didn't really happen in the United States so it didn't affect their daily life. But on September 11, 2001, all of that changed and terrorism **hit home**, starting to affect Americans in their own country.

On that day, men affiliated with (or connected to) a terrorist group called al-Qaeda **hijacked** four planes, taking control of them and changing their **route** (or the place that they were going to fly to). Two of the planes **crashed into** (or hit) the World Trade Center Towers, two very tall buildings, in New York City. The planes exploded (or blew into many pieces) and caused a lot of damage (or broken and ruined things) in the buildings. Many people died on **impact** (or at the moment when the planes hit the buildings), but many more people died when the buildings **collapsed** (or fell down) a little while later.

The third plane was flown into the Pentagon, which is a large building near Washington, DC that is the headquarters (or most important building) for the U.S. military. The fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, a state that's also in the northeastern part of the country. Many people think that the hijackers had wanted to crash that plane into the White House where the president lives, but the people on the plane stopped them from doing that.

Almost 3,000 people died in the terrorist attacks that day. The attacks had a big effect on the economy, too. Many businesses in the World Trade Center and nearby buildings had to close because they had too much damage and they had lost too many employees. All airplanes were **grounded**, meaning that they were not allowed to fly right after the attacks. The **stock market** (or the place where ownership in companies is bought and sold) was closed for one week.

But the biggest change was that Americans no longer felt safe. They felt **vulnerable** to terrorists, knowing the terrorists could hurt them at any time. The United States now has many new laws for fighting terrorism, but everyone knows that another attack could happen anywhere and at any time. In that way, the attacks on September 11, 2001 have changed life in the United States forever.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001 in the United States?

terrorism – violence that is used against people to try to scare them

* During the period of terrorism, many apartment buildings were destroyed by bombs.

to hit home – to understand that something affects one's own life personally, and doesn't happen only to other people or in other places

* The difficulty of losing a loved one really hit home for James when his sister died.

to hijack – to take control of a plane and change its flight plan to try to get something that one wants, usually from a government

* The men hijacked the plane and said that they wanted \$4 million.

route – the way that one plans to go from one place to another; the path followed by a car, plane, bus, or train

* This bus route goes through northwest Springfield and passes by the library.

to crash into (something) – to hit something while one is in motion

* When the driver fell asleep, her car crashed into a tree.

on impact – at the moment when something hits something else

* New cars have airbags that are designed to open immediately on impact when there is an accident.

to collapse – to fall down quickly, usually because something is weak and unstable

* Georgette collapsed and fell to the ground when she heard the bad news.

grounded – not allowed to fly for a period of time

* That plane has been grounded because it's too old and isn't safe to fly anymore.

stock market – the place where ownership in companies is bought and sold as a way to make money

* Do you invest money in the stock market or do you keep your money in a bank account?

vulnerable – weak and feeling that one can be hurt easily by other people

* He felt very vulnerable after his girlfriend ended their relationship.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

87. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.

Answer:

- | | | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| • Cherokee | • Apache | • Arawak | • Crow |
| • Navajo | • Iroquois | • Shawnee | • Teton |
| • Sioux | • Creek | • Mohegan | • Hopi |
| • Chippewa | • Blackfeet | • Huron | • Inuit |
| • Choctaw | • Seminole | • Oneida | |
| • Pueblo | • Cheyenne | • Lakota | |

Explanation:

The American Indians, also known as Native Americans, were the first people living in North America when the Europeans began to **settle** (or begin to live there).

Although many people think about the American Indians as a **homogenous** group, or a group of all the same kinds of people, they were actually many smaller groups known as **tribes**. The tribes had different languages, customs (or ways of doing things), foods, and cultures. Some of them were very large and others were very small. Only a small **fraction** (or percentage or portion) of the original tribes still exist, because many of them were destroyed by the European settlers.

Today, the U.S. government officially recognizes (or accepts and lists) 563 American Indian tribes. The Cherokee and the Navajo are the two biggest tribes. The Cherokees' **ancestral lands**, or the land that belonged to their relatives many years ago, are in the area that is now the eastern and southeastern parts of the United States, especially where the states of Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina are today. But as the United States grew, most of the Cherokee were forced to **relocate**, or made to live in a new place even though they didn't want to. The forced relocation is called the Trail of Tears because many Cherokee died while they were going to the new lands further west. Today, about 730,000 Cherokees live in the United States, mostly in the states of Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas.

The Navajo are the second-biggest tribe of American Indians, with almost 300,000 Navajos living in the United States today. Most of them live in Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico. In traditional Navajo society, only women could own animals and **property** (or buildings or land). When people were married, the man moved into the woman's home and the daughters inherited all the animals and property, meaning that the daughters got those things when the mother died. The Navajo are famous **silversmiths**, making jewelry and other things out of silver, a metal that is valuable and gray in color. The Navajo are also famous for their **weaving**, making beautiful red blankets and **rugs**, which are small carpets or floor coverings.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

Glossary

87. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.

to settle – to begin living in a place where people had not lived before

* When did Americans begin to settle the state of Idaho?

homogenous – a group of all of the same kinds of people; a group of similar people or things

* Teresa went to a very homogenous high school, where all the students lived in the same neighborhood and planned to go to the same college.

tribe – a group of Native Americans who live together and have the same culture, customs, and language

* Which tribe did the famous Native American guide, Sacajawea, belong to?

fraction – a percentage, portion, or part of something

* Today, we have only a fraction of the forests that we had 500 years ago.

ancestral lands – the land that belonged to one's relatives many years ago

* He was born and raised in New Mexico, but his ancestral lands are in Scotland.

to relocate – to begin to live in a new place, often because one has a new job that requires moving

* When Cord became vice-president, he relocated to Utah, where the company's main offices are.

property – land, buildings, and other things that are owned by a person

* They want to buy some property where they can build their own home.

silversmith – a person who makes jewelry and other things out of silver metal

* Jenna asked a silversmith to fix her broken necklace.

to weave – to make fabrics and other things by crossing colored threads in certain ways to make designs

* Rocio wove a beautiful tablecloth using different color fabrics brought home from her many travels.

rug – a small carpet or floor covering

* We put a rug by the front door so that guests could wipe their feet.



**Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100**

INTEGRATED CIVICS

A: Geography

88. Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.

Answer:

- Missouri (River)
- Mississippi (River)

Explanation:

Before there were cars or very good **railroads**, which are special roads for trains, most transportation in the United States **relied on** (or used) rivers. Using boats on rivers was the fastest way to move people and **goods** (or products, like food, medicine, and tools) from one place to another. The United States has many long rivers that were used for transportation in those early days. This was especially true for the country's longest river, the Missouri River, and its second-longest river, the Mississippi River.

The Missouri River played an important **role** (or part) in the **exploration** of the western United States. This exploration was an effort to try to learn what the land was like in the West. In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson asked Captain Meriwether Lewis to explore the Missouri River and find out whether it could be used to transport (or move) things across North America. At that time, no one knew where the Missouri River went, but everyone wanted to find a river that would move things from the east to the west.

Captain Meriwether Lewis chose a team of 33 people to go with him, including a partner, William Clark. Their **journey** (or long trip) became known as the Lewis and Clark expedition. It lasted from 1803 to 1806. It was a difficult and dangerous journey into **uncharted** (or unmapped and unknown) land. The men suffered from disease (or illnesses), hunger, cold weather, and fights against the Native Americans (or American Indians), but only one man died during the expedition. This is a **testament** to William and Clark's leadership, or a sign that their leadership was very good and strong.

Lewis and Clark wrote about everything they did and saw in **journals** (or small books). They described many plant and animal **species** (or types of plants and animals) that no one had seen before. They discovered that the Missouri River did not go all the way to the Pacific Ocean, but they got there anyway. They established relationships with many Native American tribes (or groups). In general, the expedition was a major success and an important source of information for the United States at that time.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

88. Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.

railroad – a special road for trains that move by rolling over two very long, straight pieces of metal

* Many people came from China to help build railroads in the western United States.

to rely on (something) – to need and use something; to depend on something

* We're relying on your computer skills to help us create a new website.

goods – products; things that are bought and sold

* What kind of goods does your store sell?

to play an important role – to be an important part of something; to have important responsibilities in a project, organization, or business

* The secretary plays an important role in the organization, making sure that everyone knows where the meetings will be.

exploration – the process of traveling through an area to learn more about it

* Neil Armstrong is famous for his exploration of the moon.

journey – a long trip; traveling a long distance

* I'd love to go on a journey around the world.

uncharted – unexplored; not known in very much detail; unfamiliar

* Most of the universe is still uncharted.

to be a testament to (something) – to show that something is true; to be an example showing that something is true

* Her good grades are a testament to how hard she studies.

journal – a small book that one writes in, usually to remember what one has done or how one felt about something

* He has been keeping a journal since he was in seventh grade, writing in it every night before going to bed.

species – a type of plant or animal

* The scientist found a new species of insect in the jungle.



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89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?

Answer:

Pacific (Ocean)

Explanation:

In the 1800s, most Americans believed in **Manifest Destiny**, or the idea that the United States was supposed to **expand** (or grow) across North America to reach from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west. This was an important dream for the United States, but it took many, many years to **accomplish** (or to make it happen).

Traveling to the west coast was very difficult and dangerous in the 1800s. People couldn't fly in a plane or drive a car, of course. Instead, they traveled in **covered wagons**, which were heavy, wooden boxes covered in white fabric that rode on wheels and were pulled by oxen, which are very strong cows. The trail (or road) that they traveled on was called the **Oregon Trail**. The **journey** (or long trip) covered more than 2,000 miles and took about five or six months. The Oregon Trail was mostly used between 1841 and 1869. People stopped using it once the first **transcontinental railroad** (or the road for trains that went across all of North America) was built, because it was easier, safer, and faster to travel by train. But today, if you visit western states, you can still see some of the Oregon Trail's **wheel ruts**, or the deep marks in the ground that were made by the heavy wagons.

Many of the people who **set off** (or began their journey) on the Oregon Trail never made it to Oregon. About one-tenth (or 10%) of the travelers died as they traveled toward the west. Some of the travelers who **survived** (or didn't die) went to Oregon, but others stopped and settled (or began to build homes and live) in other states, like Utah. Many of the people who traveled on the Oregon Trail went to California to participate in the California Gold Rush, where they could find gold and make a lot of money by selling it.



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Glossary

89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?

Manifest Destiny – the idea that the United States should reach across North American from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean

* Due to the idea of Manifest Destiny, the United States became one of the biggest countries in the world.

to expand – to make something bigger or to make it cover a larger area

* He wanted to write a short book, but it has expanded to almost 1,000 pages.

to accomplish – to make something happen, especially something that is difficult and important

* What did you accomplish in your last job that you think was helpful to your company?

covered wagon – a heavy, wooden box covered with white fabric that moved on wheels and was pulled by strong cows or horses

* Riding in a covered wagon was uncomfortable, but it was better than walking across North America.

Oregon Trail – the trail or path that people followed from the eastern part of the early United States to the Oregon Territory in the west

* Many people died of disease along the Oregon Trail.

journey – a long trip; traveling a long distance

* We should write a book about our journey from Florida to Alaska.

transcontinental railroad – the road for trains that goes across all of North America

* How long does it take to ride a train all the way along the transcontinental railroad?

wheel ruts – deep marks in the ground that are made by heavy vehicles or other things that are pulled on wheels

* We can see wheel ruts where your car drove through our grass.

to set off – to begin a trip; to start on one's travels; to begin a journey

* They set off for the beach at 7:30 this morning.

to survive – to continue to exist; to live through danger or a difficult situation

* How many people survived the plane crash?



Introduction to the United States
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90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?

Answer:

Atlantic (Ocean)

Explanation:

The east **coast** of the United States, or the part of the United States that touches the Atlantic Ocean, is also called the Eastern Seaboard or the Atlantic Seaboard. The Eastern Seaboard is the place where the United States began. When Europeans crossed the Atlantic Ocean, they settled (or built homes and began to live) on the east coast.

Over time, many of the settlements (or new places where they built homes and lived) grew, becoming some of the large cities that are still on the Eastern Seaboard today. Other settlements failed when the people living there died or moved to other places. But one settlement is different because nobody knows what happened to it. This was the famous settlement called the Roanoke **Colony**; a colony is an area of land that belongs to a country (in this case, England), but is far away from it.

An Englishman named Walter Raleigh wanted to establish (or create) the first English colony in North America on Roanoke Island, which is now part of North Carolina. Two groups of people tried to live there, but they failed.

This first time, a man named Richard Greville took a group of people to Roanoke Island and then went back to England to get **supplies**, which are the things that people need to survive, like food, cloth, and tools. However, his return to Roanoke Island was **delayed** (or happened later than the people had expected). Without these important supplies, the people who lived there decided to leave the island when they had an opportunity and went back to England.

In 1587, another group was left on Roanoke Island and the leader, John White, went back to England for supplies. But he was not able to come back as quickly as he had planned, because England was **at war with** (or fighting with) Spain and wanted to have all the ships for that war. John wasn't able to go back to Roanoke Island until 1590, three years after he had left. When he got there, everyone had **disappeared**, meaning that no one was there. Nobody knew where they had gone.

Some people think that the colonists might have been killed or **kidnapped** (or taken away) by Native Americans. Other people think that they might have died in a storm while trying to go to another island. We will probably never know the true **fate** (or what actually happened) of the 117 people on the Lost Colony of Roanoke Island.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?

coast – land next to an ocean

* We're going to spend the weekend at the coast, playing in the sun and eating lots of fresh fish.

colony – an area of land that is far away from the country it belongs to

* Can you name the 13 original colonies that later became the United States?

supplies – things that people need to survive; things and equipment needed for a project

* What kind of supplies should we bring for the camping trip?

to be delayed – to happen later than expected; to have an event begin later than planned

* Our flight was delayed due to bad weather.

at war with (a country) – fighting with another country

* Has the United States ever been at war with Portugal?

to disappear – to no longer be seen; to become lost

* I thought I put my purse over here, but it has disappeared!

to kidnap (someone) – to take someone away, usually because one wants to get money for returning him or her

* Two men kidnapped the lawyer's son and said that they wouldn't give him back until they received \$2 million.

fate – the things that happen to someone; outcome; the events that happen in someone's life

* Would you like to be able to see into the future and know your own fate?



Introduction to the United States
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91. Name one U.S. territory.

Answer:

- Puerto Rico
- American Samoa
- Guam
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- Northern Mariana Islands

Explanation:

When most people think of the United States, they think about the 50 states, but they often forget that other parts of the world are part of the United States, too. A U.S. **territory** is an area of land that belongs to the U.S. government but is not a state or the country's capital, Washington, DC. Right now there are five U.S. territories: Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. Three of these territories – Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands – are in the Pacific Ocean. The other two territories – Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands – are in the Atlantic Ocean.

Those territories are **unincorporated**, which means that the land belongs to the United States, but only certain parts of the U.S. Constitution (or the country's most important legal document) are **applied** to those territories. The territories have to follow some parts of the Constitution, but they do not have to follow all of it. Let's take a look at what this means for one territory, Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory in 1898 at the end of the Spanish-American War. Spain **ceded** (or gave) Puerto Rico to the United States. Since then, Puerto Rico has been a U.S. territory. The **head of state** (or most important political leader) of Puerto Rico is the president of the United States. But Puerto Rico also has its own government which **mirrors** (or is very similar to) the U.S. government. Puerto Rico's government has three branches or parts just like the U.S. government does. These branches are the executive (which enforces laws), the legislative (which makes laws), and the judicial (which decides what laws mean). In the United States, the head or leader of the executive branch is the president. In Puerto Rico, the head of the executive branch is called a governor.

The 50 states in the United States have representation in Congress (or the national government), meaning that people from those states can vote in the national legislature. As a territory, Puerto Rico doesn't have this same representation, but it does have a **nonvoting delegate**, which is a person who is elected to be part of the U.S. Congress but cannot vote there.

An interesting thing is that Puerto Ricans who live in Puerto Rico are **prohibited from** voting in the U.S. presidential elections, meaning that they cannot help decide who will be the next U.S. president. But Puerto Ricans who live in a U.S. state can vote to decide who will be the next U.S. president.



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Glossary

91. Name one U.S. territory.

territory – an area of land that belongs to the United States but is not a state

* People who live in a U.S. territory can get a U.S. passport.

unincorporated – land that is not officially part of a city, country, or business

* Edgar lives in an unincorporated part of the city, far from downtown.

to apply – to affect; to be relevant for

* To be fair, the same rules must apply to everyone.

to cede – for one country to give land to another country, usually because it lost a war

* Did Mexico cede part of California to the United States?

head of state – the most important political leader of a country

* The U.S. president often meets with heads of state from other countries.

to mirror – to be very similar to or the same as something

* Her new hairstyle mirrors her mother's hairstyle almost exactly.

nonvoting delegate – a person who is chosen to attend meetings, especially of a legislature, but cannot vote there

* How many nonvoting delegates does Washington, DC have in the U.S. Congress?

to prohibit – to forbid; to not allow something; to make something illegal or unacceptable

* Employees in our company are prohibit from sending personal emails from work.



Introduction to the United States
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92. Name one state that borders Canada.

Answer:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| • Maine | • Ohio | • Idaho |
| • New Hampshire | • Michigan | • Washington |
| • Vermont | • Minnesota | • Alaska |
| • New York | • North Dakota | |
| • Pennsylvania | • Montana | |

Explanation:

Canada, which is **just to the north** of the United States, or immediately north of the United States, shares a **border** (or separating line) with 13 U.S. states. The border is 5,522 miles (or 8,891 kilometers) long, which makes it the longest border between two countries in the world. It includes the long border on the southern end of Canada and also the border between Canada and the state of Alaska, in northwestern Canada.

The U.S.-Canadian border is **non-militarized**, meaning that the U.S. and Canadian armies are not usually on the border. The border is also not normally **patrolled**, so people from the government are not usually watching the border to look for problems. However, there are 140 **customs** stations on the border, which are places where a government official (or a person who works for the government) asks people why they are entering the country and what they are bringing with them to make sure that they aren't buying things in one country and selling them in the other country. Every year, the U.S.-Canadian border is crossed more than 100 million times.

The U.S.-Canadian border has changed many times. The first border between the two countries was **demarcated** (or drawn on a map) in 1783. The last time the border was changed was in 1903. Today there are no border **disputes** or disagreements about where one country ends and the other country begins.



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Glossary

92. Name one state that borders Canada.

just to the (direction) – immediately next to something in a particular direction

* The library is just to the south of the museum.

border – a line drawn between two countries, states, counties, or similar areas on a map, where one area ends and another area begins

* Can you cross the U.S./Canadian border on a bicycle?

non-militarized – not related to the military; without soldiers protecting an area

* The new president said in her speech: “Wouldn't it be nice to live in a non-militarized world?”

patrolled – monitored by police or soldiers to make sure things are safe and that there aren't any problems

* The factory is patrolled by security guards at night.

customs – places where a person who works for the government asks people why they are entering the country and what they are bringing with them to make sure that they aren't buying things in one country and selling them in the other country

* When you go through customs, you have to say whether you are carrying any fresh fruits or vegetables.

demarcated – with the border or the limits of an area drawn on a map

* All of the city's neighborhoods are demarcated on this map.

dispute – disagreement; argument

* The children had a dispute over who should get to sit in the front seat of the car.



Introduction to the United States
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93. Name one state that borders Mexico.

Answer:

- California
- Arizona
- New Mexico
- Texas

Explanation:

The border between the United States and Mexico is the international border that is crossed more often than any other international border in the world. It **stretches** (or reaches) 1,969 miles (or 3,169 kilometers) and touches four U.S. states: Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas. There are about 250 million legal crossings every year, and many more that are illegal (or against the law).

When the Mexican-American War ended in 1848, Mexico and the United States signed an official agreement called the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Treaty put the border between the two countries on the Rio Grande and the Colorado River. In that same agreement, Mexico **ceded** (or gave away) more than half of its land, or about 525,000 square miles (or 1.36 million square kilometers), to the United States.

About 80,000 Mexicans lived in that area when the land was **transferred** and its ownership changed from Mexico to the United States. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave those Mexicans U.S. citizenship. In that same treaty, the United States also agreed to **honor** (or respect) the **property rights** (or the ownership of land) of the Mexicans who lived in the land that was transferred from Mexico to the United States. However, there are many **cases** (or stories) where the United States did not honor those property rights and those Mexican Americans sometimes **complain**, saying that what the United States did was unfair.

Today, most of the southwestern United States is on land that used to belong to Mexico, and many of the people who live there are **descendants** (or grandchildren and great-grandchildren) of the people who lived there when the land was still part of Mexico. Mexican traditions (or old way of doing things) still affect life in those areas today. In fact, Mexican culture and traditions have had so much **influence** (or effect) on the southwestern United States that a style of cooking called Tex-Mex, which is short for Texas-Mexican, has become very popular not only in that part of the country, but all over the United States.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

93. Name one state that borders Mexico.

to stretch – to reach from one place to another, usually over a long distance

* The fence stretches from 13th Street to 109th Street.

to cede – for one country to give land to another country, usually because it lost a war

* Which parts of the United States were ceded by other countries?

to transfer (something) – to change the ownership of something

* Meyoung felt sad when she transferred her car to its new owners.

to honor (someone or something) – to give special recognition or importance to someone or something

* We honor the memory of our father by putting flowers on his grave every year.

property rights – ownership of the land

* The government doesn't have any property rights here because this is private land.

case – an instance; an occurrence

* The judge said that normally she thinks children should live with their parents, but in this case, it made sense to separate the children from their mother.

to complain – to say or write something to let others know that one doesn't like something or thinks it is wrong

* The customer complained that her soup was cold.

descendant – grandchildren and great-grandchildren; relatives who are born after oneself

* Duc wants to leave his home to his descendants after he dies.

influence – effect or impact, especially on the way that people think and act; the ability to change something

* Do you think that the way we dress has a lot of influence on whether people take us seriously?



Introduction to the United States
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94. What is the capital of the United States?

Answer:

Washington, D.C.

Explanation:

The government of the United States is a **representative democracy**, which means that citizens vote for people who then represent them in the government, making laws and decisions that reflect (or are the same as) what the citizens want. Congress, or the lawmaking part of government, is made up of representatives from each state who represent the citizens of their state when Congress votes. But not all U.S. citizens have representation in Congress.

U.S. citizens who live in the country's capitol, Washington, DC, do not have a representative who can vote in Congress. That is because Washington, DC is not a state. The country's founding fathers, or the people who were very important in creating the country, didn't want the national capital to be in a state, because then, that state would have too much power. So instead, the capitol is between two states: Maryland and Virginia. Almost 600,000 people live in Washington, DC, and none of them have representation in Congress.

Until 1961, Washington, DC **residents** (or people who live in Washington, DC) weren't able to vote in the presidential elections either, meaning that they had no **influence** over (or ability to change) who would become the next president. This changed with the Twenty-Third Amendment (or official change) to the U.S. Constitution, which is the country's most important legal document. So now DC residents can vote in the presidential elections.

Most DC residents think it is unfair (or not right) that they do not have representation in Congress. They believe that all U.S. citizens should have representation, and they have **turned to** U.S. history (or looked to U.S. history) to find support for their argument. When North America was still a British colony, or land that belonged to Great Britain, people argued that taxation without representation, or having to pay money to the British government when they had no representation in it, was unfair.

Today DC residents use that same phrase, taxation without representation, to make the same argument. The phrase even **appears** (or is shown) on DC **license plates**, which are the flat, rectangular pieces of metal with letters and numbers on the front and back of cars and trucks, showing that the car is registered with the government. In the United States, each state has its own license plate. The one in DC says "taxation without representation" to **remind** people (or make them remember) that they think the situation is unfair.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

94. What is the capital of the United States?

representative democracy – a type of government in which citizens vote for people who represent them in the government, usually making laws and decisions that the citizens want

* In a representative democracy, people work closely with their elected representatives if they want to change something about their government.

resident – a person who lives in a particular state or area

* How long have you been a resident of Illinois?

influence – effect or impact, especially on the way that people think and act; the ability to change something

* Which author has had the greatest influence on your writing style?

to turn to (something) – to look at, read, or use something, especially to find information when one is researching something else

* Bernice turned to the newspaper when she wanted to find out which movies were playing at the theater.

to appear – to be seen

* Your eyes appear green when you wear a green shirt, but normally they look blue.

license plate – a flat, rectangular pieces of metal with letters and numbers on the front and back of cars and trucks, showing that the car is registered with the government

* The police officer told the neighborhood group: "If you see someone driving dangerously, write down the license plate number and call the police."

to remind (someone) – to make someone remember something; to tell someone about a future event so that he or she doesn't forget

* I'd like to remind you to be back here by 12:00, or else the bus will leave without you.

unfair – not treating people equally

* The students thought it was unfair for the teacher to give some students extra homework.



Introduction to the United States
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95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?

Answer:

- New York (Harbor)
- Liberty Island
- [Also acceptable are New Jersey, near New York City, and on the Hudson (River).]

Explanation:

Since 1886, the Statue of Liberty has been a **symbol** of freedom to people all over the world, meaning that when they look at a picture or photograph of the statue of liberty, they think about freedom in the United States. The Statue of Liberty welcomes people to the United States, or lets them know that the country is happy to have them come to visit or live there. The Statue of Liberty was a gift from the government of France and now stands on Liberty Island in New York.

The Statue of Liberty, which is often referred to as “she” (or as a woman), is 151 feet (or 46 meters) tall and stands on a **pedestal** (or base) so that she reaches up to 305 feet (or 93 meters) tall. She is made of **copper**, which is a type of metal that turns green over time. Visitors used to be able to walk up the 354 steps inside the statue to enjoy **panoramic** (or very big and wide) views of New York City, but today they can see the statue only from below.

The Statue of Liberty is a statue of a woman wearing long **robes**, or large pieces of cloth that are worn over her shoulders and reach to her feet. Her right arm is **extended** (or held up) into the air and holds a **torch**, which is a long stick that burns on one end to make light. Her left arm holds a **tablet**, or a large piece of stone where writing has been carved or cut into the stone. The tablet says July 4, 1776, which is the day that the United States adopted or approved the Declaration of Independence and stopped being part of Great Britain. The date is written in **Roman numerals**, which is a way of writing numbers using letters instead of numbers.

When it is very windy, the Statue of Liberty **sways** (or moves from side to side) in the wind. The statue itself moves about 3 inches (or 7 centimeters), and the torch sways even more.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?

symbol – a picture or photograph that makes one think about something else or that represents something else

* Dark grey clouds are a symbol for sadness.

pedestal – the base of a statue; the large, heavy thing that a statue stands or rests on top of

* That statue weighs a lot so the pedestal must be extremely strong.

copper – a type of metal that turns green over time

* Some people enjoy cooking in pots made of copper.

panoramic – very big and wide, especially relating to views and scenery

* When they got to the top of the mountain, they took pictures of the panoramic views.

robe – a large piece of cloth that is worn over one's shoulders and reaches one's feet

* After taking a shower, she put on a robe and dried her hair.

to extend (something) – to hold something up in the air

* Mehdi extended her finger and pointed to the plane in the sky.

torch – a long stick that has fire on one end to make light

* They carried torches as they walked through the jungle at night.

tablet – a large piece of stone with writing that has been carved or cut into it

* The Bible says that God gave Moses a tablet with the 10 commandments, or rules that must be followed.

Roman numerals – a way of writing numbers using letters instead of numbers

* In Roman numerals, the year 2008 is MMVIII.

to sway – to move slowly from side to side

* When the woman heard the bad news, she swayed and then fell to the ground.



Introduction to the United States
The Complete Course: Questions 1 – 100

B: Symbols

96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?

Answer:

- Because there were 13 original colonies
- Because the stripes represent the original colonies

Explanation:

The U.S. flag is often called the Stars and Stripes, because those words describe what the flag looks like. The flag has 13 stripes, which are **horizontal** lines (or lines that run from left to right). The stripes **alternate** between red and white, meaning that first there is a red stripe, then a white stripe, then another red stripe, and so on. The upper left-hand corner is a smaller blue rectangle with 50 white stars, which are objects with five points.

The U.S. flag has a lot of **symbolism**, meaning that it uses images to present ideas. For example, the symbolism of the 50 stars is that there is one star for each state. The 50 stars are identical, having the same size and shape. This symbolizes the equality (or sameness) of the states, with no state having more power or importance than any other state.

The symbolism of the 13 stripes is that each stripe represents one of the original 13 colonies, or the original pieces of land that were owned by Great Britain. After the Revolutionary War, each of the colonies became one state in the new United States.

Some people think that the flag's colors have symbolism, too. They often say that the white stripes symbolize **purity** or goodness, the red stripes symbolize strength and **courage** (or bravery and not being afraid), and the stars symbolize **heaven** (or the place where Christians believe God lives and where good people go when they die). But the founding fathers did not give special meaning to the colors of the flag. Those meanings were created after the flag had already been **adopted** (or chosen to be used) by the U.S. government.

Sometimes the flag is **decorated** (or made to look especially nice) for special events. At these times, a gold **fringe** is put around the flag, which is a lot of short gold-colored threads (or pieces of string). The U.S. flag with gold fringe is sometimes seen in **parades**, which are celebrations where many people walk down the street slowly, often with flags.



Introduction to the United States
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Glossary

96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?

horizontal – from right to left, not up and down

* In a spreadsheet, columns are vertical and rows are horizontal.

to alternate – to change between two different things, back and forth

* Her emotions alternated between joy and sadness many times during the day.

symbolism – representation of an idea or thing by a picture or image

* Did you find very much symbolism in the book?

purity – wholeness and goodness, without being mixed with anything else

* We expect medicines to have extremely high purity.

courage – bravery; not being afraid

* He showed a lot of courage when he jumped into the river to save the swimmer's life.

heaven – the place where Christians believe God lives and where good people go when they die

* Cristal's uncle died last year, but she believes that he is in heaven.

to adopt – to accept something and begin to do, use, or have it

* Delaware has adopted the peach blossom as its official state flower.

decorated – made to look especially nice by adding or attaching smaller things

* Their home is decorated with very modern furniture and artwork.

fringe – a lot of short gold-colored threads (or pieces of string) that are sewn around the edge of a piece of fabric or clothing

* Her red dress has some fringe along the bottom.

parade – a celebration where many people walk down the street slowly, often with flags.

* Did you watch the parade on New Year's Day?



Introduction to the United States
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97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?

Answer:

- Because there is one star for each state
- Because each star represents a state
- Because there are 50 states

Explanation:

The **design** (or plan) for the flag of the United States has changed 26 times in the country's short history. When the Declaration of Independence was written, the United States didn't have a flag. The first flag was adopted (or chosen to be used) on June 14, 1777. Now we **commemorate** (or remember) that day by celebrating June 14 as Flag Day every year.

Most Americans are taught and believe that a woman named Betsy Ross designed and **sewed** (or made from fabric) the first U.S. flag. Most historians think that she actually didn't do this, but it has become a popular story among Americans. The story is so **commonplace** (or popular and easy to find) that the first U.S. flag is usually called "the Betsy Ross flag."

The Betsy Ross flag had the same 13 red and white horizontal stripes (or lines that run from left to right) as the U.S. flag does today. But it had fewer stars. In 1777, when the flag was made, there were only 13 states, so the flag had only 13 stars, with one for each state. The stars were in a circle on top of the blue part of the flag.

As the United States grew and more pieces of land became states, the U.S. flag had to be redesigned (or designed again) to have more stars, keeping the **tradition** (or the way things have always been done) of having one star for each state. The first design change was made in 1795, when two stars were added for the two new states of Kentucky and Vermont. That flag also had 15 stripes.

But as the country continued to grow and there were more states, Congress (or the lawmaking part of the U.S. government) decided that the number of stars should increase with the number of states, but that there should always be only 13 stripes. These stripes represented the 13 original colonies, or areas of land controlled by Great Britain that later became states.

The current 50-star flag has been the **official** design, or the one approved by the U.S. government, since 1960. However, some people are already **looking to the future**, or making plans for what might happen in the future. They have designed 51-star flags that could be used if and when another state is **incorporated** (or becomes part of the United States).



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Glossary

97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?

design – a plan for what something will look like or how something will be made

* Do you like the design for the new building?

to commemorate – to do something to remember and honor an important person or event in history

* Every year, the company commemorates its anniversary by organizing a fun event for all of its employees.

to sew – to make something out of fabric or cloth; to use needle and thread or a machine to make something out of cloth

* My aunt says that sewing her own clothes is cheaper than buying them at the store.

commonplace – popular and easy to find; not rare

* Gas stations are commonplace throughout the United States.

tradition – the way things have always been done; something that is done the same way every time

* Their family has a tradition of opening one gift on the night before Christmas, and then opening the rest of the gifts on Christmas Day.

official – approved by the government or another organization or person with power

* The school's official colors are orange and black.

to look to the future – to make plans for what might happen in the future

* Looking to the future, we need to find new sources of energy.

to be incorporated – to officially become part of a city, country, or business

* The area known as Gresham was incorporated into the city in 1972.



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98. What is the name of the national anthem?

Answer:

The Star-Spangled Banner

Explanation:

At the beginning of almost any football, basketball, or baseball game in the United States, people sing the country's **national anthem**, or the song that officially represents the United States. This song is called The Star-Spangled Banner. When Americans sing it, they take off their hat, **put their hand over their heart** (or rest their right hand on the left side of their chest), and sing while looking at the U.S. flag.

The phrase "Star-Spangled Banner" is another name for the U.S. flag. A **banner** is a long piece of fabric, like a flag. The U.S. flag is star-**spangled** because it is covered with stars.

The **melody** (or the musical notes) come from an old British drinking song, or a song that men used to sing after they had drunk too much alcohol. The melody is very difficult to sing, because it has a wide **range**, meaning that some of the notes are very low and other notes are very high.

The **lyrics** (or the words that are sung in the song) were written by a man named Francis Scott Key. He wrote the lyrics while watching Fort McHenry, a military place in Maryland, being attacked by the British during the War of 1812.

In the lyrics, Francis Scott Key is asking whether people can still see the flag in the early morning after a long night of being attacked. It is a very **patriotic** song, or a song that makes people feel proud of their country.

The flag that inspired the lyrics, or made Francis Scott Key want to write them, is called the Star-Spangled Banner and it has become an important **artifact** (or a historical object that has a lot of meaning). The flag has been **restored** (or cleaned and repaired or fixed) and is on display (or being shown to people) at the National Museum of American History in the nation's capitol, Washington, DC.



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Glossary

98. What is the name of the national anthem?

national anthem – a song that officially represents a country

* Do you know all the words to your country's national anthem?

to put (one's) hand over (one's) heart – to rest one's right hand on the left side of one's chest

* The girl put her hand over her chest and promised that she would never tell her friend's secret to anyone.

banner – a long piece of fabric, like a flag

* The business hung a big banner with its logo on the side of its building.

spangled – covered with something that is shiny and captures one's interest

* The dancers wore red spangled shirts.

melody – the main musical notes in a song; the music of a song without the words

* He's such a bad singer that we couldn't even recognize the melody.

range – the size of the difference between the highest and lowest musical notes in a song

* Most people can sing this song easily because it has a very limited range.

lyrics – the words that are sung in a song

* If you can't understand a song's lyrics, try looking for the words online.

patriotic – proud of one's country

* Americans who are very patriotic wear red, white, and blue on Independence Day.

artifact – a historical object that has a lot of meaning

* The scientist found an old stone knife in Colorado that was an artifact from the earliest Native Americans.

restored – repaired; fixed; repaired and made to look like its original condition

* The museum employees have restored the building to be like it was 200 years ago.



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C: Holidays

99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?

Answer:

July 4

Explanation:

Every year on July 4, millions of Americans **commemorate** (or remember and honor) the day when the United States adopted (or approved) the Declaration of Independence and created a new country that was independent and no longer part of Great Britain.

Independence Day is a national holiday, meaning that most people don't have to work that day. Instead, they usually spend the day with family and friends. Since Independence Day **falls in** the summer (or happens in the summer) when the weather is very nice, the **tradition** (or something that is normally done the same way every year) is to have a **barbeque** outside, where people cook meat over a fire in a special machine called a grill. Probably the most traditional foods are hamburgers and hot dogs. People also eat a lot of chips and salads, and drink sodas and beer. There is usually watermelon, which is a large, round, green fruit that is red with black seeds inside, for dessert.

Baseball games, parades (or events where many people celebrate by walking through the street slowly), and concerts are also popular on Independence Day. Many politicians (or people who have been chosen to work in government) give speeches that day, talking about the importance of U.S. history and **patriotism** (or feelings of being proud of one's country).

At **dusk**, which is the time of day when the sun sets and it begins to get dark, people often go to parks to see **fireworks**. Fireworks are colorful explosions in the air that make a lot of noise and are pretty to look at. Most towns and cities have fireworks displays where they **set off** (or start) many fireworks in a short period of time. Some people go to sit on the roof of their home, where they can see many fireworks displays at the same time.

Other people like to set off their own fireworks. In June and early July, many fireworks are sold to individuals and families. These fireworks are smaller and can be **lit** (or started with fire) in the street to make noise and colored lights. Some cities and states allow people to set off their own fireworks, but it is not legal in other cities and states.



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Glossary

99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?

to commemorate – to do something to remember and honor an important person or event in history

* Lillian commemorates the death of her husband every year by visiting his grave.

to fall in (a period of time) – to happen in a certain period of time

* Her birthday falls in the month of March.

tradition – the way things have always been done; something that is done the same way every time

* They have a tradition of always going to Raleigh, North Carolina for one weekend in August.

barbeque – a meal where people cook meat over a fire on a piece of metal

* Our neighbors had a great barbeque with hamburgers and hot dogs.

patriotism – feelings of being proud of one's country

* Jerry shows his patriotism by flying the U.S. flag in his front yard.

dusk – the time of day when the sun sets and it begins to get dark

* Yes, you can go play in the park, but please come back home before dusk.

fireworks – colorful explosions in the air that make a lot of noise and are pretty to look at

* There are usually a lot of fireworks when the Olympics begin.

to set off – to cause an explosion

* We shouldn't set off fireworks next to dry leaves because we might accidentally start a fire.

to light (something) – to start a candle, match, fireworks, or something else with fire

* Please don't light your cigarette inside the house.



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100. Name two national U.S. holidays.

Answer:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr., Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

Explanation:

The United States has 10 national holidays, or days when all people who work for the national government and most other people do not have to go to work. These holidays are usually on a Monday or Friday so that people can enjoy a **three-day weekend**, where they have three days **in a row** (or right after each other) away from work.

Some of the holidays are found in other countries. For example, New Year's Day is the first day of the year and is celebrated almost everywhere. Labor Day is a day to **honor** (or recognize and respect) workers. Independence Day, in July, is the day when the United States became a country. And Christmas is the day when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

But other holidays are **unique to** the United States, meaning that they are not found in most other countries. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, for example, is celebrated on the third Monday in January to honor the man who led the civil rights movement in the United States, or the period of time when African American or black people worked hard to be treated fairly by white people.

Presidents' Day is celebrated on the birthday of George Washington, the first president of the United States, but it is **supposed** to honor (or should honor) all U.S. presidents. Memorial Day in late May honors the Americans who have **died for their country**, or died while fighting in wars.

In October, Columbus Day remembers Christopher Columbus, who **is credited with** (or remembered for) discovering (or finding) North America. One month later, in November, Veterans Day honors all the U.S. **veterans**, or Americans who have been part of the armed forces.

Finally, Thanksgiving is celebrated in late November. This holiday is about being **grateful** (or wanting to say thank you) for the **harvest** (or the food that was grown). It is also about the early Americans being grateful to the Native Americans who shared their food with them.



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Glossary

100. Name two national U.S. holidays.

three-day weekend – a period of time when a holiday is celebrated on a Monday or Friday and people who normally do not work on Saturday or Sunday have three days away from work

* Are you going anywhere for the three-day weekend?

in a row – consecutive; right after each other

* The athletes are tired because they've had to play three games in a row.

to honor (someone or something) – to give special recognition or importance to someone or something

* The scientist was honored with a Nobel Prize.

unique to (something or someone) – not found anywhere else; found only in one person or thing

* Kangaroos are unique to Australia.

to be supposed to – should; to be required to

* Aren't you supposed to be at work? Why did you come home so early?

to die for (one's) country – to die while fighting in a war for one's country

* Xang was sad, but proud that her son had died for his country.

to be credited with (something) – to be remembered as the person who did something

* Betsy Ross is credited with being the person who created the American flag.

veteran – a person who has fought in a war

* Zeke is a veteran of the Gulf War.

grateful – wanting to say thank you for something; feeling thankful about something

* I am so grateful to you for your kindness.

harvest – something that was grown and collected from the fields

* This year, they had a great wheat harvest.