InstantCert
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# Free American Government CLEP Practice Test

10 questions from InstantCert's 363-card American Government study guide

## How to use this PDF

Each of these questions is a sentence with one blank and four choices. Pick the best fit, mark it, and keep going. The answer key with explanations starts after question 10, so do all 10 before you look. No timer. On the real exam you get 54 seconds per question, so if you want a challenge, give yourself 9 minutes for the set.

## What your score means

### 0 to 4 correct

The American Government CLEP runs on terms, court cases, and how the branches check each other, and a score in this range usually means the terms are not there yet. Ten questions is a sample, not a diagnosis. Take Round 2 on the page linked at the end before you decide how much work is ahead of you.

### 5 to 7 correct

Right in the middle. Close enough to the line to be worth studying for, and not close enough to walk in cold. Take Round 2 and see if the number holds.

### 8 to 10 correct

You know the terms and the cases. Keep in mind that the real exam asks how the institutions work and how they check each other, and it gives you 54 seconds a question. Take Round 2, then put your study time into Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, and the courts, which together are 30% to 35% of the exam.

## Questions

QUESTION 1 OF 10 | INSTITUTIONS AND POLICY PROCESSES

**The president can veto a bill by employing a technique known as a _____ veto, where the president takes no action with regard to the bill when the Congress has adjourned during the 10-day period after a bill has been sent to the President to be signed.**

A. secret
B. pocket
C. line item
D. absolute

QUESTION 2 OF 10 | INSTITUTIONS AND POLICY PROCESSES

**In the US v. Nixon, 1974, the Supreme Court ruled against president Nixon, stating that _____ did not allow him to refuse to comply with a court order to produce material for a criminal trial.**

A. expressed powers
B. fairness doctrine
C. executive privilege
D. privileges and immunities clause

QUESTION 3 OF 10 | INSTITUTIONS AND POLICY PROCESSES

**The legislation termed the _____ Act established the Civil Service Commission.**

A. Pendleton
B. Glass-Steagall
C. Wagner
D. Kellogg-Briand

QUESTION 4 OF 10 | CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS

**The Supreme Court Case Brown v. _____ Topeka, Kansas, declared "separate but equal" unconstitutional for public schools.**

A. Sanford
B. Ogden
C. Carr
D. Board of Education

QUESTION 5 OF 10 | CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS

**The court case _____ established the right to counsel in a criminal trial.**

A. Gideon v. Wainwright
B. Bowers v. Hardwick
C. Baker v. Carr
D. Roe v. Wade

QUESTION 6 OF 10 | POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

**Political Action Committees (PACs) are more likely to support a/an _____ candidate.**

A. incumbent
B. independent
C. radical
D. liberal

QUESTION 7 OF 10 | POLITICAL PARTIES AND INTEREST GROUPS

**When voters vote for the president and vice president, they are really voting for _____ who are pledged to vote for that party.**

A. middlemen
B. electors
C. middle managers
D. proxies

QUESTION 8 OF 10 | POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOR

**_____ is the most significant influence on an individual's political party affiliation.**

A. Education
B. Intelligence
C. Religion
D. Family

QUESTION 9 OF 10 | CONSTITUTIONAL UNDERPINNINGS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

**Giving each state an equal number of Senatorial representatives regardless of population, the _____ of 1787 balanced out the method assigning numbers of representatives in the House based on state population.**

A. Missouri Compromise
B. Great Compromise
C. Three-Fifths Compromise
D. Kansas-Nebraska Act

QUESTION 10 OF 10 | CONSTITUTIONAL UNDERPINNINGS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

**In _____ v. Maryland, the Supreme Court upheld the concept of implied powers, and gave a broad interpretation of the elastic clause.**

A. McCulloch
B. Marbury
C. Plessy
D. Mapp

# Answer Key

### 1. B pocket

A pocket veto enables the president to refuse to sign a bill into law without the political ramifications of an explicit veto. The pocket veto cannot be overridden by Congress since the bill effectively "expires" due to lack of Presidential action and Congressional presence.

### 2. C executive privilege

Nixon sought to not turn over taped conversations that revealed White House knowledge of the Watergate break-in by invoking executive privilege.

### 3. A Pendleton

The Pendleton Act created a merit system for federal employees, reduced the strength of the spoils system and made it illegal for employees to be required to make political party contributions.

### 4. D Board of Education

Until Brown v. Board, schools could be segregated by race under the theory of "separate but equal" access to education. Brown v. Board declared that practice unconstitutional and led to the desegregation of American schools.

### 5. A Gideon v. Wainwright

Gideon, after being sentenced to five years for petty larceny, wrote a petition to the Supreme Court. He argued that his lack of counsel allowed him to be convicted on a weak body of evidence.

### 6. A incumbent

Because of various advantages an incumbent enjoys, he/she is more likely to be reelected, and hence more likely to gain PAC support.

### 7. B electors

Voters are actually voting for electors pledged to vote for a certain party. For example, if a state is entitled to 30 electoral votes, and the majority of the people's votes in that state are for the Republican party candidates, then that state's electoral college seats are filled with 30 electors who are pledged to vote Republican. Those electors are the ones who actually choose who becomes President, and hypothetically, they could vote for another party.

### 8. D Family

While a variety of factors can influence an individual's choice of political party, the political party of his/her family is the most significant determinant.

### 9. B Great Compromise

The Great Compromise, also known as the Connecticut Compromise, tries to provide some balance of power between the small states and the populous states. In the Senate, representation is equal—2 senators for every state. In the House, representation is based on population, giving more power to the populous states. This compromise gave something to both the supporters of the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan.

**10. A McCulloch**

McCulloch v. Maryland was a landmark case in which the Supreme Court ruled that a state could not tax a federal bank.

## Want 10 more? Take Round 2 online

Round 2 is 10 more questions from the same 363 cards. It leans toward the founding and the Constitution, with judicial review, the Articles of Confederation, and the election of 1800. Take Round 1 on the page below, enter your email on the score screen, and the Round 2 link follows.

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## The full American Government study guide

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