

CIVICS:

MID-TERM EXAM REVIEW PACKET

BENCHMARK 1 - FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPALS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT:

Fundamental political principles

- Consent of the governed—People are the source of any and all governmental power.
- Limited government—Government is not all-powerful and may do only those things people have given it the power to do.
- Rule of law—The government and those who govern are bound by the law.
- Democracy—In a democratic system of government the people rule.
- Representative government—In a representative system of government people elect public officeholders to make laws and conduct government on their behalf.

A citizen is an individual with certain rights and duties under a government and who, by birth or by choice, owes allegiance to that government.

The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America defines citizenship: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the state wherein they reside."

Means of obtaining U. S. citizenship

- Birth or Naturalization
- Immigration and naturalization, particularly in the twentieth century, have led to an increasingly diverse society.
- To become a citizen through naturalization, a person must demonstrate knowledge of American history and principles and the ability to speak and write English.

For government to be effective, citizens must fulfill their civic duties.

Duties of responsible citizens:

- Obey laws
- Pay taxes
- Serve in the armed forces if called
- Serve on a jury or as a witness in court

***Citizens who choose not to fulfill these civic duties face legal consequences.



A basic responsibility of citizenship is to contribute to the common good. - Civic responsibilities are fulfilled by choice; they are voluntary.

Responsibilities of citizens:

- Register and vote
- Hold elective office
- Influence government by communicating with government officials
- Serve in voluntary, appointed positions
- Participate in political campaigns
- Keep informed regarding current issues
- Respect others' rights to an equal voice in government

A democratic society requires the active participation of its citizens.

Ways for citizens to participate in community service:

- Volunteer to support democratic institutions.
- Express concern about the welfare of the community as a whole (e.g., environment, public health and safety, education).
- Help to make the community a good place to work and live (e.g., by becoming involved with public service organizations, tutoring, volunteering in nursing homes).

Helpful Hint: It is your DUTY to come to school, but is your RESPONSIBILITY to do your homework.

A **duty** is something you *have to do*; a **responsibility** is something you *should do*.

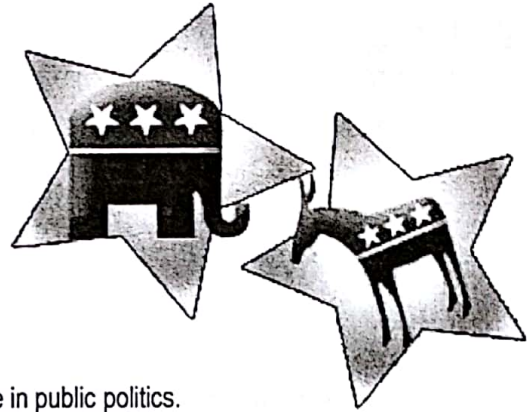
BENCHMARK 2 - Election Process

Describing the functions of political parties.

Political parties play a key role in government and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.

Functions of political parties:

- Recruiting and nominating candidates
- Educating the electorate about campaign issues
- Helping candidates win elections
- Monitoring actions of officeholders



Comparing the similarities and differences of political parties.

- A two-party system characterizes the American political process.
- Although third parties rarely win elections, they play an important role in public politics.

Similarities between parties:

- They organize to win elections .
- They influence public policies.
- They reflect both liberal and conservative views.
- They define themselves in a way that wins majority support by appealing to the political center.

Differences between the parties:

- Stated differently in a party's platform and reflected in campaigning.

Third parties:

- Introduce new ideas or press for a particular issue
- Often revolve around a political personality (e.g., Theodore Roosevelt)

1. Analyzing campaigns for elective office, with emphasis on the role of the media.

- Voters evaluate information presented in political campaigns to make reasoned choices among candidates.
- The media plays an important role in the political process.

Strategies for evaluating campaign speeches, literature, and advertisements for accuracy

- Separating fact from opinion
- Detecting bias
- Evaluating sources
- Identifying propaganda

Mass media roles in elections

- Identifying candidates
- Emphasizing selected issues
- Writing editorials, creating political cartoons, publishing op-ed pieces
- Broadcasting different points of view

2. Examining the role of campaign contributions and costs.

- Running for political office is expensive.



- Rising campaign costs-
 - Require candidates to conduct extensive fund-raising activities
 - Limit opportunities to run for public office
 - Give an advantage to wealthy individuals who run for office
 - Encourage the development of political action committees (PACs)
 - Give issue-oriented special interest groups increased influence



Campaign finance reform:

- Rising campaign costs have led to efforts to reform campaign finance laws.
- Limits exist on the amount individuals may contribute to political candidates and campaigns.

3. Describing voter registration and participation.

- Voting is a basic responsibility of citizenship.
- Voter registration is required before a citizen may vote.
- The number of citizens who register and vote is related to how important election issues are to citizens.
- Only citizens who register can participate in primary and general elections.

Factors in predicting which citizens will vote:

- Education
- Age
- Income

Why citizens fail to vote:

- Lack of interest
- Failure to register

- The percentage of voters who participate in presidential elections is usually greater than the percentage of voters who participate in state and local elections.
- Every vote is important.



4. Describing the role of the electoral college in the election of the President and Vice President.

The electoral college process is used to select the President and Vice President of the United States.

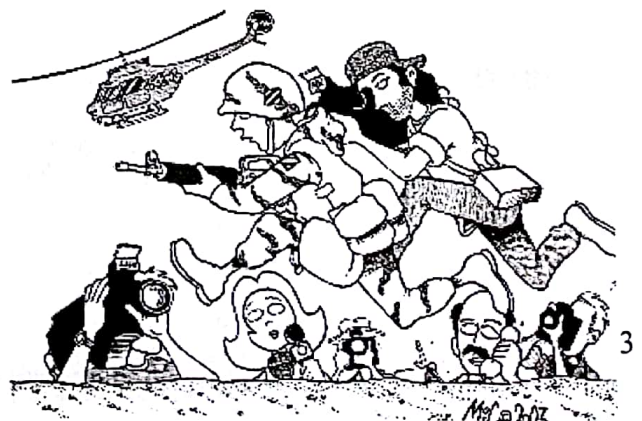
Electoral college process:

1. The slate of electors for each state is chosen by popular vote.
 2. The electors meet to vote for President and Vice President.
 3. The winner-take-all system leads to the targeting of large states for campaigning, although candidates must pay attention to small states whose electoral votes may make the difference in tight elections.
- The number of electors of each state is based on the state's Congressional representation.
 - The requirements for a majority vote to win in the electoral college favors a two-party system.

★ **BENCHMARK 3 - Public Opinion and Public Policy:**

The media informs policymakers and influences public policy.

Ways media play an important role in setting the public agenda



- Focusing public attention on selected issues
- Offering a forum in which opposing viewpoints are communicated
- Holding government officials accountable to the public
- Government officials use the media to communicate with the public.

Individuals and interest groups influence public policy.

Lobbying: Seeking to influence legislators to introduce or vote for or against a bill

Ways individuals influence public policy

- Participating in politics (voting, campaigning)
- Expressing opinions (lobbying, demonstrating, writing letters)
- Joining interest groups

Ways interest groups influence public policy

- Identifying issues
- Making political contributions
- Lobbying government officials



★ BENCHMARK 4 - Significant Historical Documents

American constitutional government is founded on concepts articulated in earlier documents, including the charters of the *Virginia Company of London*, the *Virginia Declaration of Rights*, the *Declaration of Independence*, the *Articles of Confederation*, and the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*.

-Social Contract - John Locke: *The people give up some freedoms to the government in return the government must provide protection of the people's lives, property, & liberty. If the government misuses its power the people have the responsibility (duty) to overthrow and replace that government.*

• **Articles of Confederation**

- Established the first form of national government for the independent states
- Maintained that major powers resided with individual states
- Weakness of central government (e.g., no power to tax and enforce laws)—Led to the writing of the Constitution of the United States of America

• **Constitution of the United States of America, including the Bill of Rights**

- Establishes the structure of the United States government.
- Guarantees equality under the law with majority rule and the rights of the minority protected.
- Affirms individual worth and dignity of all people.
- Protects the fundamental freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition.



• The preamble of a constitution sets forth the goals and purposes to be served by the government. It expresses the reasons the constitution was written.

• The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America begins, "*We the people*," which establishes that the power of government comes from the people.

Purposes of U.S. government:



1. To form a union
2. To establish justice
3. To ensure domestic peace
4. To provide defense

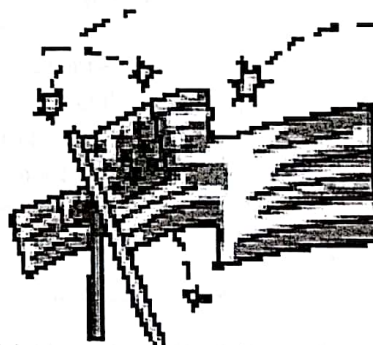


BENCHMARK 5 - Federalism, Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances

- **Federalism:** Powers of the Federal, State, and Concurrent Powers. The Constitution of the United States of America establishes the principle of federalism, which is the division of power between the states and the national government.
- The Constitution of the United States of America establishes a federal form of government in which the national government is supreme.
- The powers of the national government are either enumerated/expressed or implied in the Constitution of the United States of America.
- The powers not given to the national government by the Constitution of the United States of America are reserved for the states.
- The Constitution of the United States of America denies powers to both the national and state governments.
- The powers of the local governments in Virginia are derived from the state.

Primary responsibilities of each level of government:




- **National**—Conducts foreign policy, regulates commerce
- **State**—Promotes public health, safety, and welfare



- **The powers and responsibilities of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches at both the national and state levels are limited.**
 - ❖ Separating power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches helps prevent any one branch from abusing its power.
 - ❖ A system of checks and balances gives each of the three branches of government ways to limit the powers of the other branches.
 - ❖ Legislative, executive, and judicial powers are separated at the state and national levels of government.
 - ❖ *All powers of local government in Virginia are created and controlled by the state.*

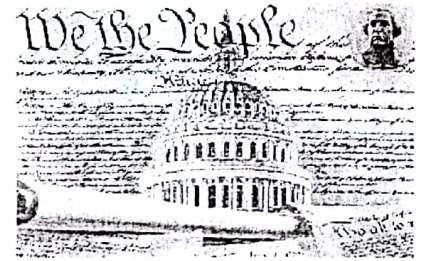
<u>Legislative powers over each branch:</u>	<u>Executive powers over each branch:</u>	<u>Judicial powers over each branch:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Over the executive branch:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislative branch can override vetoes. - Legislative branch can impeach a President. • <u>Over the judicial branch:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislative branch can approve federal judges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The legislative branch:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive branch can veto acts of Congress. - Executive branch can call Congress into special session. • <u>The judicial branch:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive branch can appoint federal judges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The legislative branch:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judicial branch can declare laws unconstitutional • <u>The executive branch:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive branch can declare executive acts unconstitutional

– Legislative branch can impeach federal judges.

<u>Branch of Government</u>	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>Virginia Government</u>	<u>National Government</u>
 <p><u>Legislative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * U.S. Congress (National Level) * General Assembly (State Level) 	Makes ordinances for community; approves annual budget; limits power to that delegated by the state.	Makes laws for Virginia; approves biennial (two-year) budget; exercises power under the 10th amendment.	Makes laws for nation; approves annual budget; approves presidential appointments.
 <p><u>Executive</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * President (National Level) * Governor (State Level) 	Elected or appointed by the Board of Supervisors or City Council; city or county managers hired by local legislatures.	Executes laws of Virginia; prepares biennial budget for General Assembly; appoints cabinet officers and boards; administers state bureaucracy; grants pardons.	Executes law of the land; prepares annual budget for congressional action; appoints cabinet officers, ambassadors, and federal judges; administers federal bureaucracy.
 <p><u>Judicial</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * U.S. Supreme Court (National Level) * Virginia Supreme Court (State Level) 	Local courts—Hear cases under the authority provided by state legislation.	Supreme Court—Has power of judicial review over state laws Circuit courts—Try civil and criminal cases.	Supreme Court—Has power of judicial review Federal courts—Try cases involving federal law and U.S. Constitutional questions.

★ **BENCHMARK 6 - Amending the U. S. Constitution-**

- Describe the 7 Articles of the Constitution
- The 1st 10 amendments to the Constitution – ie: "Bill of Rights"
- There are 27 Amendments to the Constitution.
 - Know selected amendments: - 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 19th, 23rd, 24th, & 26th



First Amendment freedoms :

- Religion—Government may not establish an official religion, nor endorse, or unduly interfere with the free exercise of religion.
- Speech—Individuals are free to express their opinions and beliefs.
- Press—The press has the right to gather and publish information, including that which criticizes the government.
- Assembly—Individuals may peacefully gather.
- Petition—Individuals have the right to make their views known to public officials.

****14th Amendment :** Extends the rights guaranteed by *due process* and equal protection of the laws (to actions of the states).

****16th Amendment :** Authorizes Congress to tax incomes (personal and business).

★ **BENCHMARK 7 - The Lawmaking Process and the Roles and Powers of the Executive Branch:**

➤ Officials who are elected to serve in the state and national legislatures make laws.

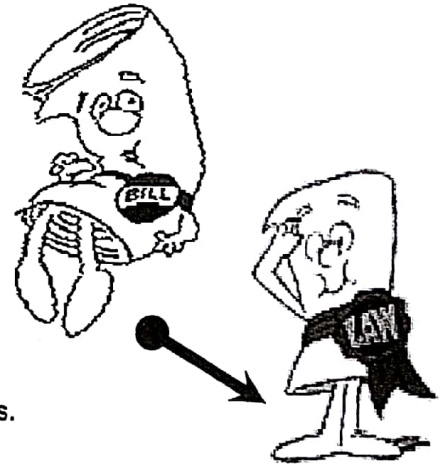
- Bicameral: Having two houses (e.g., the Senate and the House of Representatives).
 - The Virginia General Assembly and the United States Congress are bicameral legislatures.

Legislative powers:

- Expressed (specifically listed)
- Implied (used to carry out expressed powers)

The lawmaking process in national and state legislatures:

1. Working in committees
 2. Debating on the floor
 3. Voting on a bill by both houses
 4. Signing the bill into law by the President or governor
- Elected officials write laws and take action in response to problems or issues.
- Individuals and interest groups help shape legislation.



The executive branch plays a key role in the policymaking process.

- The powers of the executive branch are defined in Article II of the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of Virginia.
- The executive branch at the state and national levels carries out the law.

Ways the executive branch influences policymaking:

- Proposing legislation in an annual speech to the legislature (State of the Commonwealth or State of the Union Address)
- Appealing directly to the people
- Approving or vetoing legislation
- Appointing officials who carry out the laws
- *Cabinet departments, agencies, and regulatory groups interpret and help with carrying out laws.*