

Assessment 1: Written Test (Matching, Fill-in-the-Blanks, Multiple Choice, T and F, and Short Essay)

The following is an 8th grade U.S. History test I developed on the creation and organization of the U.S. government after the Revolutionary War.

Objectives reached:

1. Social Studies Department goals of reading comprehension and writing.
2. How the articles of Federation and the Constitution formed a basis for democracy.
3. Why civil rights and liberties were important to the people of the United States.
4. The strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
5. The importance of compromise in creating the Constitution.

Chapter 9 Test: Creating a Nation

Matching:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| A. Part of government that carries out the laws | _____ 1. Continental Congress |
| B. Having two groups in a lawmaking body | _____ 2. Articles of Confederation |
| C. National lawmaking body with power to make treaties and declare war | _____ 3. Executive branch |
| D. Part of government that makes laws | _____ 4. ratify |
| E. Written plan of government | _____ 5. constitution |
| F. First constitution of the United States | _____ 6. bicameral |
| G. To approve officially | _____ 7. Bills of rights |
| H. Lists of individual freedoms protected by government | _____ 8. Legislative branch |

In the space provided, write the appropriate plan/compromise from the Constitutional Convention. You will choose the Virginia Plan, New Jersey Plan, or the Great Compromise for each answer.

9. _____: suggested that the number of representatives in both houses of legislature be based on state population.
10. _____: presented by William Paterson; represented smaller states.
11. _____: proposed creating an upper house with two senators per state, elected by state legislatures.
12. _____: developed by James Madison.

13. _____ : allowed each state to have one vote in the legislature.
14. _____ : created by a grand committee chaired by Benjamin Franklin.
15. _____ : proposed that Congress should choose the President.
16. _____ : angered larger states because it gave states equal representation regardless of population.
17. _____ : suggested establishing a lower house with the number of representatives based on population, elected by voters.
18. _____ : upset smaller states because it based representation on population.

In the space provided, write the word(s) that best complete the sentence.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| • Amendments | • Judicial |
| • Articles of Confederation | • Legislative |
| • Constitution | • Representatives |
| • Checks and balances | • Senators |
| • Executive | • Separation of powers |
| • Federal | • State |
| • Federalism | |

19. The authors of the constitution adopted a concept known as the _____.
20. The population of a state determines how many _____ it has.
21. The Bill of Rights includes the first ten _____ to the Constitution.
22. Under the _____, the states had more power than the national government.
23. A system where national, state, and local governments share power is _____.
24. A _____ government has the power to establish public schools, conduct local elections, and provide for the welfare of its citizens.
25. The _____ branch has the power to decide if laws are constitutional.
26. The _____ government has the power to issue money, declare war, and make treaties.
27. Under the _____, states gave up some of their power to form a stronger national government.
28. The writers of the Constitution kept each government branch from assuming too much power through _____.
29. Each state has two _____ representing it in Congress.

30. The Senate and House of Representatives are part of the _____ branch of government.

31. The President directs the _____ branch of government.

Multiple Choice:

32. All states except Pennsylvania and Georgia created _____, or two-house legislatures.

- A. bicameral
- B. trilateral
- C. parallel
- D. deuces

33. A republic is:

- A. a government in which a king makes all rules and laws.
- B. a government in which people elect officials to represent them.
- C. a government in which God (or other deity) is recognized as the supreme ruler.
- D. a government in which all power is vested in a few people of a dominant class.

34. A period of time when business activity slows down and unemployment increases is called:

- A. Repression
- B. Dark Ages
- C. an economic depression
- D. compromise

35. The Constitutional Convention was:

- A. a meeting in which Continental Army was formed
- B. a 1787 meeting in Philadelphia during which the United States Constitution was written and all delegates got along/agreed on everything right away.
- C. a 1787 meeting in Philadelphia during which the United States Constitution was written and many delegates disagreed with one another and argued bitterly over the conditions of the document.
- D. a meeting in which each state voted for or against conquering Great Britain and making a colony out of them!

36. Representative of voters in each state who select the President and Vice President describes the:

- A. gentry
- B. republicans
- C. federalists
- D. electoral college

37. To *impeach* a federal or state public official means:

- A. to bring formal charges against him/her with the intent of removing the official from office
- B. to elect them into office
- C. to reward them with a medal of honor
- D. to insult them or humiliate them in public

38. An action by which an executive (the President) rejects a bill submitted by legislature/refuses to approve it is called:

- A. revenge
- B. a veto
- C. a strategy
- D. a tribute

39. Who was the author of the Articles of Confederation?

- A. Edmund Randolph
- B. Daniel Shays
- C. John Dickinson
- D. Benjamin Franklin

40. Why were written constitutions important to the colonists?

- A. Because they were pretty
- B. Because the writers had the best recipes
- C. Because it laid out the conditions of the Land Ordinance of 1785
- D. Because they spelled out the rights of all citizens and outlined the limits on the power of government

41. Which of the following is considered a weakness of the Articles of Confederation?

- A. The government could not carry out the laws it made
- B. There was no provision for a court system or for taxation
- C. The government had no power to conduct war or keep peace
- D. All of the above

42. "Farmers were upset with the government that was jailing them and seizing their property when they couldn't pay their debts." This statement best describes:

- A. trade among the states
- B. Shay's Rebellion
- C. the Constitutional Convention
- D. the Virginia Plan

43. How did the Northwest Ordinance encourage settlement of the western frontier?

- A. It put few restrictions on settling
- B. It put many restrictions on settling
- C. It provided a way to achieve statehood
- D. A and C

True or False:

44. _____: George Washington was the President of the Constitutional Convention.
45. _____: To veto a law passed by Congress means to accept it.
46. _____: In 1960, John Locke believed all people had natural rights to life, liberty, and property.
47. _____: Even though it had already been approved by nine states, it was important that New York and Virginia ratify the Constitution because they were the two largest states at the time.

Essay:

48. Why do you think it was difficult to write a national constitution?
49. According to the Northwest Ordinance, if a territory's population reached 60,000, it could apply for statehood. How would the rights of these states compare to the original 13 states? Do you think this was fair?
50. Why did the writers of the Constitution find it necessary to separate the powers of the Federal government into three separate branches? What are the three branches called? Define them.

Extra Credit:

- Name some problems that a new nation might face.
- What do you think George Washington meant when he called the Confederation Congress "a shadow without a substance"?
- Why do you think Americans under the new Constitution wanted George Washington to be their first President?

Assessment 2: Essay

Have students research their state constitution and note its major provisions. In their research, they should consider questions such as:

What is the structure of the state government?

What elected offices are mentioned in the constitution, and what electoral procedures are followed in filling these offices?

What individual rights are mentioned in the constitution?

What are the amendment procedures?

How many times has the constitution been amended?

Have students use their findings to write an essay that compares the state constitution with the U.S. one.

Assessment 3: Performance

Have students perform a mock Constitutional Convention in which they assume the roles and viewpoints of the principal players involved in the making of the Constitution. Students will be divided into two groups, the New Jersey Plan or the Virginia Plan, and argue their points accordingly. Two students will portray George Washington (the leader/facilitator of the convention) and Ben Franklin, who chaired the committee that came up with the Great Compromise.

My Choice:

In an ideal situation, I would prefer to do the simulation of the Constitutional Convention. This assessment is far more student-centered and engaging than a short-answer or essay test. I think students will find an assessment like this far more memorable and meaningful because they are putting themselves in the shoes of the delegates themselves in the making of the Constitution that we still consider the supreme law of the land today. Students will have to know the values and beliefs of the person they are portraying instead of having to recall facts on paper. They are re-enacting how the convention might have occurred.