CONSTITUTION REVIEW

1. The authors of the United States Constitution believed that the voice of the people should be heard frequently. Which part of the Government was instituted to respond most directly to the will of the people?
   1. Senate
   2. House of Representatives
   3. Supreme Court
   4. Presidency

Correct Answer Number: 2

Explanation: Prior to the passage of the 17th Amendment in 1913, which provided for direct election of U.S. Senators, members of the House of Representatives were the only Federal officials that were voted into office by a popular vote of the people. Before 1913, U.S. Senators were elected by state legislatures. The President has been elected to office through the Electoral College since 1789.

2. The system of checks and balances is best illustrated by the power of
   1. the President to veto a bill passed by Congress
   2. Congress to censure one of its members
   3. a governor to send the National Guard to stop a riot
   4. state and Federal governments to levy and collect taxes

Correct Answer Number: 1

Explanation: Checking and balancing involves the ability of each of the three branches of government to regulate and monitor the power of the others. In this case the ability to veto a law ensures that the legislative branch is not passing laws the go beyond their duties or powers. The president can “check” their actions by rejecting the legislation.

3. Which phrase from the Declaration of Independence most clearly reflects the idea that the people are the source of government?
   1. “... that all men are created equal,...”
   2. “... all men are... endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights
   3. “... deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...”
   4. “... governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes ...”

Correct Answer Number: 3

Explanation: The consent of the governed is an idea born of the enlightenment and the writings of John Locke. This is the idea that a government gains its power via the willingness of the people to support it. The US system expresses this notion by holding elections in which the people (the governed) select their representatives to govern (there by giving consent).

4. One way in which the United States Constitution differed from the Articles of Confederation was that the Constitution
   1. created a national government having three branches
   2. provided for the direct election of the President by the voters
   3. made the amendment process more difficult
   4. increased the powers of the states

Correct Answer Number: 1

Explanation: The US Constitution attempted to address the failing of the Articles of Confederation by creating a 3 branched government with checks and balances. This replaced the one branch federal government of the Articles of Confederation, and also increased the power of the federal government and its superiority over the governments of the individual states.
5. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, delegates from the small states most strongly supported the idea of

1. establishing a strong national executive
2. levying taxes on exports
3. popular election of Senators
4. equal representation for the states in the national legislature

**Correct Answer Number: 4**  
**Explanation:** Smaller states such as New Jersey feared domination of the national government by larger, more populous states. At the convention, smaller states argued for equal representation in government as to ensure their power. Larger states, such as Virginia, argued for representation based on population owing to their greater numbers and larger economies. “The Great Compromise” created a bicameral (or two-house) legislature (Congress) in which the upper house (the Senate) is based on equal representation (2 Senators from each state) and the lower house (The House of Representatives) is based on proportional representation related to population.

6. Which argument did the authors of the United States Constitution use when they insisted that revenue bills originate in the House of Representatives?

1. Frequent elections would make members of the House more responsive to the wishes of the voters.
2. Members of the House would have a superior understanding of economics.
3. The national budget should be determined solely by the House of Representatives.
4. Political parties would have less influence on Members of the House than on Senators.

**Correct Answer Number: 1**  
**Explanation:** Smaller states such as New Jersey feared domination of the national government by larger, more populous states. At the convention, smaller states argued for equal representation in government as to ensure their power. Larger states, such as Virginia, argued for representation based on population owing to their greater numbers and larger economies. “The Great Compromise” created a bicameral (or two-house) legislature (Congress) in which the upper house (the Senate) is based on equal representation (2 Senators from each state) and the lower house (The House of Representatives) is based on proportional representation related to population. Revenue bills originate in the House as to be a better indication of the wants and needs of the majority of citizens, who’s tax monies are being spent.

7. Which action was necessary to change from the indirect to the direct election of United States Senators?

1. ratification of a constitutional amendment  
2. passage of a Federal law
3. a Supreme Court decision  
4. a national referendum

**Correct Answer Number: 1**  
**Explanation:** The original text of the Constitution called for the election of a state’s senators to be done by the state’s legislature. This was changed in the 17th amendment that called for Senators to be elected directly by the people of the states. This was a key expansion of democracy and citizen participation, as well as a way of reducing the power and influence of political machines.

8. Antifederalists criticized the United States Constitution primarily because governing power was concentrated in the

1. State legislatures  
2. President’s Cabinet
3. delegates to the Constitutional Convention
4. National Government

**Correct Answer Number:**
Correct Answer Number: 4 Explanation: During the debates over ratification (acceptance) of the US Constitution, the Anti-Federalist forces (those opposed to the Constitution) feared the strong national government outlined in the document. They criticized the Constitution for creating a national government that they feared would dominate and control not only the state and local governments, but the lives and freedoms of its citizens. This fear was not unfounded, as many Anti-Federalists pointed to the domination and control exercised by the powerful English government during the colonial era.

9. Which feature of the Presidency is a result of a constitutional amendment?
   1. two-term limit in office
   2. power to appoint ambassadors
   3. duty to act as Commander in Chief
   4. responsibility to nominate Justices to the Supreme Court

Correct Answer Number: 1 Explanation: George Washington set the informal presidential precedent of serving only two terms. Subsequent presidents followed this, up until FDR was elected to four terms in the 1930’s – 40’s. As a result of FDR’s administration the 22nd amendment was ratified in 1951 and formally limited the President to 2 terms of service.

10. During the debates over the ratification of the United States Constitution, Federalists and Anti-Federalists disagreed most strongly over the

   1. division of powers between the national and state governments
   2. provision for admitting new states to the Union
   3. distribution of power between the Senate and the House of Representatives
   4. method of amending the Constitution

Correct Answer Number: 1 Explanation: Federalists supported the Constitution and supported the creation of strong Federal Government, headed by a strong President. The Anti-Federalists feared the power of a strong central government and preferred a system that granted greater control to the State Governments.

11. When the United States Constitution was written, which compromise was reached by the authors to gain the support of the states with small populations?

   1. Congress would consist of both a House of Representatives and a Senate.
   2. Five enslaved persons would be counted as three free persons for the purpose of taxation
   3. The President would be selected by the direct vote of the people.
   4. Exported goods could not be taxed, but imported goods could be taxed.

Correct Answer Number: 1 Explanation: Smaller states such as New Jersey feared domination of the national government by larger, more populous states. At the convention, smaller states argued for equal representation in government as to ensure their power. Larger states, such as Virginia, argued for representation based on population owing to their greater numbers and larger economies. “The Great Compromise” created a bicameral (or two-house) legislature (Congress) in which the upper house (the Senate) is based on equal representation (2 Senators from each state) and the lower house (The House of Representatives) is based on proportional representation related to population.

12. The United States Constitution requires that a census be taken every ten years to reapportion

   1. membership in the House of Representatives
   2. the number of delegates to national nominating conventions
   3. Federal aid to localities
4. agricultural subsidies

Correct Answer Number: 1 Explanation: Representation to the House of Representatives is based upon population of a state. The census serves every decade to determine the states’ populations and assign representatives based upon that count. The number of representatives has been “fixed” at 435 since the early 1900’s and as such any gain in a state’s number of representatives must be offset by the loss of representatives by other state(s).

13. The major reason the Bill of Rights was added to the United States Constitution was to

1. limit the power of state governments
2. protect individual liberties against abuse by the Federal Government
3. provide for equal treatment of all people
4. separate powers between the three branches of government

Correct Answer Number: 2 Explanation: During the debates over ratification (acceptance) of the US Constitution, the Anti-Federalist forces (those opposed to the Constitution) feared the strong national government outlined in the document. They criticized the Constitution for creating a national government that they feared would dominate and control not only the state and local governments, but the lives and freedoms of its citizens. This fear was not unfounded, as many Anti-Federalists pointed to the domination and control exercised by the powerful English government during the colonial era. Many Anti-Federalists argued for the inclusion of a “Bill of Rights”, not unlike the existing English Bill of Rights or the Virginia Declaration of Rights, to guarantee citizens protection from the power of a strong national government. A Bill of Rights was promised during the ratification debates and was the deciding factor in swaying many Anti-Federalists into supporting the proposed Constitution. The first 10 amendments were added soon after ratification and became the US Bill of Rights.

14. Which statement best explains why the Articles of Confederation established a weak rather than a strong central government?

1. Americans were following the plan of government set up in the Declaration of Independence
2. The absence of national problems made a strong government unnecessary.
3. Colonial experiences under Great Britain had created a fear of unlimited government.
4. Revenues were not adequate to support a strong central government.

Correct Answer Number: 3 Explanation: The founding fathers feared an all-powerful national government (as England had been). So in creating the Articles of Confederation, they felt a need to weaken the power of the Federal Government, in order to keep it from dominating the states and the individual citizen. The resulting system was however too weak to govern effectively and was replaced with a stronger more enduring system under the Constitution.

15. Which fundamental political idea is expressed in the Declaration of Independence?

1. The government should guarantee every citizen economic security.
2. The central government and state governments should have equal power.
3. If the government denies its people certain basic rights, that government can be overthrown.
4. Rulers derive their right to govern from God and are therefore bound to govern in the nation’s best interest.

Correct Answer Number: 3 Explanation: The writings of John Locke and other authors of the Enlightenment expressed the idea of “The Consent of the Governed” and “Natural Rights”. Natural Rights are those rights all men are born with and that should be protected by a fair and just government. Locke
called for “Life Liberty and Property” as natural rights. Jefferson borrowed this idea for incorporation into the Declaration of Independence.

16. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 adopted the Great Compromise to settle differences over
   1. slavery
   2. representation in Congress
   3. interstate trade
   4. taxation

Correct Answer Number: 2

17. Soon after the Constitution of the United States was ratified, the first ten amendments were added because many citizens felt the need for
   1. strengthening the power of the federal courts
   2. ensuring the division of powers between the state and federal governments
   3. establishing a national bank
   4. protecting their liberties from abuses by the federal government

Correct Answer Number: 4

18. The Constitution assigns the power to ratify treaties exclusively to the
   1. Supreme Court
   2. United States Senate
   3. House of Representatives
   4. president

Correct Answer Number: 2

19. Which newspaper headline shows the operation of the system of checks and balances?
   1. “Senate Rejects President’s Choice of Supreme Court Justice”
   2. “Florida To Gain Two Seats in the United States House of Representatives”
   3. “Albany County Receives $4 Million from Congress for Transportation Development”
   4. “New York State Rejects Federal Regulations on Drug Testing”

Correct Answer Number: 1

20. A republican form of government is described as one in which
   1. there is a two-party system
   2. representatives are elected by the people
   3. elected officials have limited terms
   4. government power is limited by checks and balances

Correct Answer Number: 2