

# Ohio's State AIR Test - American Government Quick Review

## **CIVIC INVOLVEMENT, PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS**

### **Addressing a problem through the political process or public policy**

- political processes - acquisition of power and influencing decision making
- public policy processes - institutional actions involved with government carrying out its functions
- civic engagement - apply information literacy, problem-solving and communication skills to address societal problems

### **Political parties, interest groups and the media**

- political parties - organizations whose members hold similar views - seek to determine public policy through winning elections and public office
- interest groups - organizations whose members hold similar views - seek to influence public policy through the political and public policy processes
- media - means of mass communication
- political parties and interest groups use media to influence the political and public policy processes

### **Analyzing issues**

- researching a civic issue - determining which sources of information are relevant, identifying the perspective, evaluating credibility of sources
- public records - county tax records, state agency report, Congressional Record
- research data - may originate with universities to research institutes
- advocacy groups (interest groups, lobbies) produce literature websites that outline positions on public policy issues
- credibility of sources: qualifications of writer; circumstances in which source material was generated; internal consistency and agreement with other credible sources; use of supporting evidence and logical conclusions; bias or unstated assumptions

### **Resolution of conflicts**

- persuasion- inducing others into accepting a point of view through reasoning and argumentation
- compromise - making concessions
- consensus building - working toward achieving general agreement
- negotiation - settling differences through discussion of issues

## **BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION**

### **Principles of a federal republic**

- popular sovereignty - authority derived from the people; consent of governed
- limited government - government can only exercise powers granted to it; according to the rule of law
- federalism - power is divided between a central authority and constituent units (national government and states)
- separation of powers - distribution of powers among independent branches
- checks and balances - controlling government power - branches can restrain actions of other branches

### **Federalists and Anti-Federalists on limited government**

- Federalists - proponents of ratification of U.S. Constitution
- Anti-Federalists - ratification opponents
- key argument - extent of power that should be held by national government
- Federalists - powers given to national government addressed problems under the Articles; state sovereignty must give way to general welfare of the nation; national power was defined and limited, states still held many residual powers
- Anti-Federalists - important powers had been delegated to national government; necessary and proper and supremacy clauses made ineffective any limitations on powers of national government
- Federalists - won overall debate on basic principles with the ratification
- Anti-Federalists - achieved some success with the Bill of Rights

### **Ratification Debate and the Bill of Rights**

- to secure votes in ratifying conventions- Federalists agreed to offer bill of rights
- amendments ratified in 1791- became known as the Bill of Rights
- addressed protections for individual rights (Amendments 1-9)
- reflect principle of limited government
- 10th Amendment - addressed principle of limited government and federalism

### **Changing Constitutional Government**

- Article V - processes for amending Constitution
- judicial review - Supreme Court has declared actions of other branches and states unconstitutional
- Congress has build upon the framework of the Constitution - e.g., civil rights acts and voting rights acts
- informal practices - changed how constitutional government has been implemented - e.g., legislative oversight of executive branch grew out of Congress' need for information to help draft new legislation

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

### **Reconstruction Amendments (13-15)**

- 13th Amendment - abolished slavery
- 14th Amendment - defined what persons were citizens; protection from state infringements of rights
- 15th Amendment - extended right to vote regardless of race, color or previous condition of servitude

### **Progressive Era Amendments (16-19)**

- 16th Amendment - federal income tax-addressed distribution of wealth
- 17th Amendment - direct election of senators - addressed influence of party bosses and businesses on state legislatures' selection of senators
- 18th Amendment - prohibition of alcohol in response to links between alcohol and problems such as poverty and the destruction of family life
- 19th Amendment - ended denial of suffrage to women

### **Suffrage Amendments (15, 19, 24, 26)**

- 15th Amendment - prohibits denial of suffrage because of race, color or previous condition of servitude
- 19th Amendment - prohibits denial of suffrage to women
- 24th Amendment - prohibits use of poll taxes used to disenfranchise poor and African Americans
- 26th Amendment - extends right to vote to citizens 18 years or older - response to Vietnam War draft

### **Presidential election, terms & succession amendments (12, 20, 22, 23, 25)**

- 12th Amendment - altered Electoral College - separate ballot for Pres. and VP to avoid a tie as happened in 1800
- 20th Amendment - shortened time between elections and taking office - transportation allowed faster travel; avoids long lame duck periods
- 22nd Amendment - two-term limit on presidential terms; following four-term presidency of FDR
- 23rd Amendment - electoral votes for the District of Columbia
- 25th Amendment - presidential succession and disability - after LBJ, who had a history of heart problems, took office following the death of JFK

### **Amendments adopted under unique historical circumstances (11, 21, 27)**

- 11th Amendment - limits jurisdiction of federal courts - proposed after Supreme Court ruling in *Chisholm v. Georgia*
- 21st Amendment - repealed 18th Amendment - difficulties in enforcing prohibition and criminal activities
- 27th Amendment - limit conflicts of interest in Congress in determining their own compensation

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<p><b><u>STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT</u></b></p> <p><b>Powers and responsibilities of the three branches of government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• laws are rules - recognized as binding, enforced by a government</li> <li>• public policy - institutional actions by government in carrying out functions</li> <li>• Constitution establishes roles for each branch in law and public policy</li> <li>• legislative branch - makes laws</li> <li>• executive branch - enforces laws</li> <li>• judicial branch - interpret laws</li> <li>• legislative public policy - oversight investigations, impeachment, approving treaties, resolutions</li> <li>• executive public policy- executive orders, propose federal budget, recognize foreign nations</li> <li>• judicial public policy- amicus curiae briefs, writs of certiorari, judicial procedures, sentencing offenders</li> </ul> <p><b>Political process and interaction of three branches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactions range from working in concert to checks and balances</li> <li>• legislative checks on executive - veto override, impeachment, Senate approval of appointments and treaties, raise and govern military</li> <li>• legislative checks on judicial - creation of lower courts, determine Supreme Court appellate jurisdiction impeachment of judges</li> <li>• executive checks on legislative - convene Congress, veto legislation</li> <li>• executive checks on judicial- appoint judges, issue pardons and reprieves</li> <li>• judicial checks on legislative - Chief Justice presides over impeachment trials of president, interpret laws</li> <li>• judicial checks on executive - judges not subject to removal by president, interpret and apply laws</li> <li>• interaction impacted by interest groups, political party control, public interest, media coverage, informal relationship among branch members</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>PUBLIC POLICY</u></b></p> <p><b>Public policy in the branches and levels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• federal executive public policy - State Department - advises president on foreign policy and directs embassies</li> <li>• federal legislative public policy - Congressional Budget Office - provides analyses of economic and budget data</li> <li>• state legislative public policy - Ohio Legislative Service Commission - assists in drafting legislation</li> <li>• state judicial public policy - Ohio Courts of Common Pleas - apply sentencing</li> <li>• local legislative/executive public policy - county commissions - tax abatements</li> <li>• policy may involve multiple levels and branches - collaboration or conflict</li> </ul> <p><b>Methods used by individuals and organizations to engage government on public policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• campaign for candidates</li> <li>• provide information to executive branch</li> <li>• lobby members of a legislature</li> <li>• testimony to legislative committees</li> <li>• prepare briefs to present during judicial proceedings</li> <li>• comments during public meetings</li> <li>• conduct letter-writing campaigns</li> <li>• hold public demonstrations</li> <li>• must know proper level and branch to engage at various stages of making public policy</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY</u></b></p> <p><b>Fiscal policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• expansionary - increased government spending and reduced taxes to increase aggregate demand</li> <li>• contractionary - decreased government spending and increased taxes to decrease aggregate demand</li> <li>• difficulties - much govt spending is fixed; expansionary policies could result in inflation and contractionary could result in recession; expansionary policies are popular, contractionary policies tend to be unpopular</li> <li>• government regulations - benefits - prohibiting unfair business practices, consumer protection; costs - reduced corporate profits, slower econ. growth</li> </ul> <p><b>Monetary policy to regulate money supply</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monetary tools by Federal Reserve - open market operations, discount rate, reserve requirement</li> <li>• purchasing govt securities, reducing discount rate, reducing reserve requirement → increase money supply, decrease interest rates, encourage spending, foster expansion</li> <li>• selling govt securities, increasing discount rate, increasing reserve requirement → reduce money supply, increase interest rates, depress spending, foster contraction</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>ROLE OF THE PEOPLE</u></b></p> <p><b>Responsibilities of citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general responsibilities - respecting rule of law, paying taxes, accepting responsibility for one's actions</li> <li>• responsibilities associated with exercise of particular rights - privileges and immunities→respecting rights of others; free speech→civil discourse; bear arms→firearms training; jury trial→ serving on juries; right to vote → becoming informed on public issues</li> <li>• service - military service, community service, serving in public office</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>ROLE OF THE PEOPLE</u></b></p> <p><b>Rights as protection from government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill of Rights - specific rights and unstated rights under 9th Amendment</li> <li>• 14th Amendment due process clause- doctrine of incorporation - Bill of Rights applies to state and local governments</li> <li>• many rights protect ability to participate in political process - speech, press, assembly, petition, suffrage, hold office</li> </ul> <p><b>Individual rights are relative, not absolute</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exercise of rights must be balanced by rights of others and the common good</li> </ul> <p><b>Free exercise of rights by all people</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historically, certain groups have not been able to fully exercise their rights - government has taken actions to protect their ability to participate</li> <li>• 19th Amendment - women's suffrage</li> <li>• 24th Amendment - eliminated poll taxes</li> <li>• executive branch - used National Guard to help integrate schools; used Justice Dept. to charge violators of open housing</li> <li>• legislative branch - civil rights acts and voting rights acts</li> <li>• Supreme Court - incorporation - 14th Amendment due process applies Bill of Rights to the states</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>OHIO'S STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS</u></b></p> <p><b>Constitution of 1851 addresses problems of original Ohio constitution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• original constitution - General Assembly appointed key judicial and executive officers; governor elected but had few powers; Supreme Court found it difficult to meet once each year in every county; state was burdened with debt</li> <li>• Constitution of 1851 - major executive officials and all judges elected by vote; retroactive laws prohibited, laws required to be uniform through the state; district courts added; debt limitations, banned poll taxes and required that tax funds be used only for stated purpose</li> </ul> <p><b>Structure of Ohio Constitution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ohio Constitution consistent with basic principles of U.S. Constitution (Article VI)</li> </ul> <p><b>Role of Ohio citizens</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• state - taxes, National Guard, running for office, voting, signing petitions</li> <li>• local - organizing civic activities, attending meetings of local boards, joining community watch groups, serving in volunteer fire department</li> </ul>