

Alabama Civics Test Study Guide

POLITICAL HISTORY, PRINCIPALS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, AND SYSTEM OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

- The colonists fought the British because they were **angry about taxation without representation, the British army stayed in their houses, and they didn't have self-government.**
 - As a result, the Declaration of Independence was adopted on **July 4, 1776, and officially announced our separation from Great Britain.** This is why we celebrate **Independence Day on July 4.**
 - Other national holidays besides **July 4** include **Memorial Day, Presidents' Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Labor Day and Columbus Day.**
- The original 13 states were **New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.**
- Declaration of Independence
 - Rights in the Declaration of Independence are **life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**
 - **Thomas Jefferson** is considered the author of the Declaration of Independence.
- Constitutional Convention
 - The Constitutional Convention was held in **1787**, and it is when the **US Constitution was written by the Founding Fathers.**
 - Benjamin Franklin, author of **Poor Richard's Almanac**, is known for being the **oldest member of the Constitutional Convention and an influential U.S. diplomat.**
 - The Federalist Papers were authored by **Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison to try to convince the states to ratify the Constitution.**
- George Washington was the first president and is considered the "Father of our Country."
- The two major political parties in the United States are the **Democratic and Republican** parties.
- The 13 stripes on the American flag represent the **13 original colonies.**
- The 50 stars on the American flag **represent the 50 states.**
- The national anthem of the United States is "**The Star-Spangled Banner.**"
- "I pledge allegiance to the **Unites States of America...**"
- Constitution
 - **The supreme law of the land** in the US is the **Constitution**, which **sets up the government, defines the legal system, and protects basic rights of Americans.**
 - The first three words of the Constitution are "**We the People.**"
 - America's government consists of the **legislative, executive, and judicial branches.**
 - **Checks and balances** keep each branch of government from becoming too powerful.
 - Under the Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. Those powers include the power to **declare war, print money, create an army, and to make treaties.**
 - Under the Constitution, some powers belong to the states. Those powers include the power to **provide schooling and education, protection, safety and giving driver's licenses.**
- The United States has a **capitalist economic system**-an economy run by the free market (individuals), not the government
- Congress (legislative)-make laws
 - The two parts of the US Congress are the **Senate and House of Representatives**, and they **write federal laws.**
 - The House of Representatives is the largest part of Congress with **435 voting members.**
 - Each **state's population** determines the number of House members for each state.
 - House members (U.S Representative) serve **two-year terms.**
 - Your U.S. Representative for your Congressional District 6 is **Gary Palmer.**
 - The Senate, the smaller house of Congress, has **100 voting members.**
 - Two U.S. Senators represent everyone in the state.

- Senators serve **six-year terms**.
 - Your two U.S. Senators from Alabama are **Katie Britt** and **Tommy Tuberville**.
- President (executive)-enforces laws
 - The President oversees the **executive branch**.
 - Presidents serve terms of **four years**.
 - Your current U.S. President is **Donald Trump** (Republican).
 - The president **appoints all federal judges, signs bills into law, can veto bills, and is the Commander in Chief of the military**.
 - The President's Cabinet **advises the President**. Cabinet positions include **Secretary of Agriculture, Vice President, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Commerce, Attorney General, and Secretary of Energy**.
 - If the President can no longer serve, the **vice president** becomes president. If both the president and the vice president can no longer serve, the Speaker of the House becomes president.
 - Your current U.S. Vice President is **J. D. Vance** (Republican).
 - Your current Speaker of the House of Representatives in the U.S. House is **Mike Johnson** (Republican).
- Courts (judicial)-interprets laws
 - The judicial branch is our **federal court system** and the highest court in the US is the **Supreme Court**.
 - The judicial branch decides if a law violates the Constitution.
 - The Supreme Court has **nine Justices**.
 - The current Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court is **John Roberts**.
- Amendments
 - The Constitution has **27 amendments**.
 - The men who designed the Constitution knew it wasn't perfect, so they created a way to change or add to it through **amendments**.
 - We call the first 10 amendments to the Constitution the **Bill of Rights and they protect individual liberties**.
 - The First Amendment protects **religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly**.
 - **Freedom of religion** is the right to practice or not practice a religion.
 - The Second Amendment gives citizens **the right to bear arms**.
 - There are four specific amendments that expanded voting rights for most Americans: A citizen's voting rights cannot be taken away based on their **race (15th), gender (19th), financial status (24th), or age (over 18) (26th)**.

AMERICAN HISTORY

- Before the arrival of the Europeans, the **Native Americans** lived in America.
- **Navajo, Creek, Cherokee, Iroquois, Inuit, Mohegan, Apache and Pueblo** are Indian tribes native to the United States.
- Colonists came to America to enjoy **religions freedom and economic opportunity**.
- **People from Africa** were taken to America and sold as slaves.
- The US bought **Louisiana** from France in 1803.
- Wars fought by the US **during the 1800s** were
 - **War of 1812**
 - **Mexican American War**
 - **Civil War**
 - **Fought between North and South**
 - Fought primarily over the issue of slavery

- **Abraham Lincoln** was the president who **kept the country together with the victory of the North**
 - Emancipation Proclamation freed enslaved people in Confederate territory
- **Spanish-American War**
- Susan B. Anthony **fought for women's rights**.
- Wars fought by the US **during the 1900s** were
 - **World War I.**
 - **Woodrow Wilson** was president during World War I.
 - **World War II**
 - **Franklin Roosevelt** was president during the Great Depression and World War II.
 - The US fought **Japan, Germany, and Italy** in World War II.
 - President Dwight Eisenhower first became known as a general during WWII.
 - **Korean War**
 - **Vietnam War**
- The driving cause for the U.S. during the Cold War was containing communism.
- The Civil Rights Movement fought to end racial discrimination in the U.S.
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. **fought for civil rights for African Americans** during the Civil Rights Movement.
- On Sept. 11, 2001, **terrorists attacked the United States at the World Trade Center**.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- People living in America agree to abide by the “rule of law,” which means that **everyone-including leaders in the government-must follow the law**.
- One responsibility that is only for US citizens is **serving on a jury**.
- One right that is only for US citizens is **voting in a federal election**.
- Promises you make when you become a US citizen is that you will **defend the Constitution of the United States, give up loyalty to other countries and serve in the military if needed**.
- Citizens have to be **18 years old** to vote for president. We **vote for president** every four years in the month of **November**.
- Ways that Americans can participate in their democracy are by **voting, giving elected officials your opinions on issues, and joining a political party or community group**.
- All men must register for the Selective Service **at age 18**.
- The last day to **send in your federal income tax forms** is **April 15**.
- The current Governor of Alabama is **Kay Ivey**.

GEOGRAPHY

- Some states that border Mexico are **New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and California**.
- 13 states border Canada. Some of those states are **Montana, Washington, Alaska, and Minnesota**.
- The capital of the U.S. is **Washington D.C.**
- The capital of Alabama is **Montgomery**.
- The **Pacific Ocean** is on the West Coast of the U.S. and the **Atlantic Ocean** is on the East Coast.
- The Statue of Liberty is located in **New York Harbor in New York on Liberty Island**.
- The **Missouri River** and **Mississippi River** are the two longest rivers in the U.S.
- **Guam** is a U.S. territory.