**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 2 is **Barry Moore**.
		- 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 **Richard Shelby** 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 **Joe Biden** (Democrat).
	+ 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 **Kamala Harris** (Democrat).
	+ 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.