UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS – 2011 PRACTICE TEST
Section I
Time - 45 minutes
60 Questions

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case and then fill in the corresponding oval on the answer sheet.

1. Until the Constitution was ratified, the document that established and defined the government of the United States was the (A) Declaration of Independence (B) Bill of Rights (C) Mayflower Compact (D) Articles of Confederation (E) Treaty of Friendship and Unity

2. Which of the following statements is NOT true of the Supreme Court’s decision in *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819)?
   (A) It held that state governments could pass a law negating a federal law within their boundaries if they believed the federal law was unconstitutional.
   (B) It confirmed the supremacy of the federal government over state governments.
   (C) It determined that states could not levy taxes on federal government operations.
   (D) It interpreted the “necessary and proper” powers clause of the Constitution to mean that the federal government has implied powers not specifically stated in the Constitution.
   (E) It upheld the constitutionality of the national bank established by the federal government.

3. Which of the following is a clause of the Constitution that gives the federal government broad powers in many policy areas?
   (A) Interstate Commerce Clause
   (B) Tenth Amendment
   (C) Free-Exercise Clause
   (D) Establishment Clause
   (E) Fiscal Federalism Clause

4. While the practice of separate schools for black and white students was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), segregation in restaurants, stores, hotels, and other public accommodations remained legal until
   (A) the Supreme Court’s decision in *Loving v. Virginia* (1967)
   (B) the ratification of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment (1964)
   (C) the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
   (D) state legislatures eventually changed the laws permitting segregation
   (E) President Lyndon Johnson issued an executive order ending all segregation by race

5. Which is a reason the power of the two major parties is in decline in the United States?
   (A) The number of people voting for third parties has risen sharply.
   (B) In most states, parties no longer select the candidates for the general election.
   (C) Parties no longer have state and local organizations.
   (D) Parties no longer conduct get-out-the-vote drives.
   (E) Candidates now raise most of their campaign funds themselves and do not heavily rely on funds from their party.

6. The Supreme Court’s power of judicial review was established by
   (A) the Bill of Rights
   (B) the Constitution
   (C) the Court’s decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut*
   (D) the Court’s decision in *Marbury v. Madison*
   (E) the Court’s decision in *Gibbons v. Ogden*

7. Which one of the following groups is MOST likely to participate in an election?
   (A) African Americans
   (B) people with college degrees
   (C) Hispanic voters
   (D) people under age 35
   (E) people in households with below-average income

8. A filibuster occurs when
   (A) a majority of either the House of Representatives or the Senate support a bill but cannot get the two-thirds majority needed for cloture to end debate and vote
   (B) the Senate and House cannot agree on final language for legislation both houses have passed in different versions, and debate continues endlessly
   (C) the president announces he will veto a bill, but a group of senators keep the bill alive by continuing to debate it
   (D) a senator or small group of senators want to draw public attention to bill so it will gain support and pass
   (E) a majority the Senate supports a bill, but the majority is not large enough to produce the 60 votes needed to end debate on the bill in the Senate
9. Which of the following actions of the president has no basis in the Constitution?
   (A) issuing executive orders
   (B) serving as leader of his political party
   (C) stationing U.S. troops at bases abroad
   (D) negotiating free trade agreements with other countries
   (E) proposing legislation to Congress

10. Which of the following statements is NOT supported by the data in the table above?
    (A) While women held more of the higher-level federal jobs in 2002 than in 1982, the share of the lower-level jobs held by women actually declined.
    (B) Between 1982 and 2002, women have made more progress than blacks and Hispanics in increasing the number of higher level jobs they hold in government.
    (C) Both Hispanics and African Americans doubled their share of higher-level jobs in the federal government between 1982 and 2002.
    (D) The share of federal jobs at both the highest and lowest levels held by African Americans and Hispanics has increased between 1982 and 2002.
    (E) The percentage of federal jobs held by women increased between 1982 and 2002.

11. Which of the following is an independent federal regulatory agency?
    (A) U.S. Postal Service (USPS)
    (B) FBI
    (C) Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
    (D) Department of Veterans Affairs
    (E) The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

12. Which of the following outcomes are NOT possible in the Electoral College system?
    (A) The Electoral College could choose a president who did not have the most electoral votes.
    (B) The House of Representatives could choose the president.
    (C) The Electoral College could choose a president who did not get the most votes of the people.
    (D) The Electoral College could choose a president who did not win the most states.
    (E) Some electors could vote for a third-party candidate for president.

13. Which statement best describes American political culture?
    (A) The dominant political culture depends on which political party is in power.
    (B) Due to its ethnic diversity, there are different political cultures in the United States.
    (C) American political culture is a melting pot of different political ideals from around the world.
    (D) Liberals and conservatives in the United States have different political cultures.
    (E) The American political culture is comprised of beliefs—such as individual rights, majority rule, and limited government—that are shared by virtually all Americans.

14. Which of the following statements best summarizes the data shown in the line graph above?
    (A) U.S. District Courts have original jurisdiction in both federal civil and criminal cases.
    (B) U.S. District Courts are being overwhelmed with frivolous lawsuits.
    (C) The crime rate is on the rise throughout the United States.
    (D) Both federal civil and criminal cases have increased dramatically since 1970, with the greatest increase in civil cases.
    (E) The number of civil and criminal cases dealt with in the federal court system increases every year.
15. The Supreme Court’s decision in *Texas v. Johnson*, which overturned a state law against flag-burning, was based on
   (A) the First Amendment right to peacefully assemble to protest
   (B) the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment
   (C) the First Amendment right of freedom of speech
   (D) the restrictions on search and seizure of the Fourth Amendment
   (E) the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment

16. Which of the following is a concurrent power in the American system of federalism?
   (A) the power to make treaties with foreign governments
   (B) the power to levy taxes
   (C) the power to make monetary policy
   (D) the power to establish local governments (cities, counties, school districts, etc.)
   (E) the power to regulate interstate commerce

17. The House of Representatives and the Senate are most similar to each other in
   (A) the checks they have on the power of the president
   (B) the way they select their presiding officer
   (C) the number of members they have
   (D) the power standing committees have in the legislative process
   (E) the power of the Rules Committee to set the rules for floor debate

18. Which of the following give(s) a reason why the power of the federal government has grown relative to state governments?
   I. the devolution of power
   II. the conditional funding the federal government can provide to state governments
   III. the growth of interstate commerce
   IV. the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution
   (A) I only
   (B) II and IV only
   (C) III and IV only
   (D) II, III, and IV only
   (E) I, II, III, and IV

19. What is an open seat in a congressional election?
   (A) a seat in a congressional district that is evenly divided between Republican and Democratic voters, making it likely that either party could win
   (B) a seat in which redistricting has redefined the district’s boundaries in a way to make it unfavorable to the reelection of the incumbent
   (C) a seat for which there is no incumbent running
   (D) a seat where the incumbent has been accused of a crime and is unlikely to win reelection
   (E) a seat where the incumbent belongs to a different party than the majority of his/her constituents

20. Which one of the following does NOT describe a reason why Congress generally fails to perform the function of national leader as the Constitutional Convention intended?
   (A) Congress is usually slow to act.
   (B) Congress is often gridlocked and can’t agree on action.
   (C) Congress has little actual power.
   (D) No one in Congress represents the country as a whole.
   (E) Congressional leadership is divided among a number of people.

21. The main function of the president’s cabinet is
   (A) to put together the federal budget and submit it to Congress
   (B) to write federal regulations
   (C) to provide advice to the president
   (D) to provide leadership in the event the president is unable to perform his duties
   (E) to provide information regarding proposed legislation by testifying before Congress

22. Which statement correctly describes political socialization?
   (A) Political socialization motivates citizens to become active in politics.
   (B) Political socialization tends to produce citizens more inclined to accept socialistic programs as they get older.
   (C) Political socialization is a continuing process in which the adult years are the most important.
   (D) Political socialization is the term used to describe the growth of entitlement programs.
   (E) Political socialization is the process through which individuals develop their political values and beliefs.

23. Which of the statements below best describes reapportionment?
   (A) the redrawing of congressional districts by the House of Representatives based on a new census
   (B) the redrawing of congressional districts by state governments based on a new census
   (C) the reallocation of seats in the Senate and House of Representatives based on a new census
   (D) the reallocation of seats in the House of Representatives to the states based on a new census
   (E) the reallocation of seats on committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate between the two parties based on the most recent election.
24. The concept that the American political process is dominated by the struggle of multiple interest groups each trying to advance its own political goals can best be described as
(A) democracy
(B) pluralism
(C) free enterprise
(D) socialism
(E) elitism

25. Which of the following statements correctly describe(s) the data shown in the line graph?
I. During the time period shown, the electoral vote of the winning candidate has fluctuated markedly above and below the popular vote the candidate obtained.
II. Winning candidates have sometimes gotten less than half of the popular vote and still obtained a majority of the electoral vote.
III. In three elections since 1968, the winning candidate has gotten more than 90 percent of the electoral vote.
(A) I only
(B) II only
(C) I and II only
(D) II and III only
(E) I, II, and III

26. Which of the following is NOT a check on the power of the president that the Constitution gives Congress?
(A) Congress can pass a law the president has vetoed.
(B) Congress can reject the president’s selections of people to fill key positions in the Executive Office of the President.
(C) Congress can reject a treaty the president has negotiated.
(D) Congress can refuse to fund a program the president supports.
(E) Congress can reject the president’s nominees for federal judges.

27. Which of the following is NOT a step in the process of passing the annual federal budget?
(A) Federal agencies submit their budget requests directly to Congress.
(B) The Office of Management and Budget reviews the budget requests of the various federal agencies.
(C) The appropriations committees in the House and the Senate consider the proposed budget.
(D) The budget committees in the House and Senate consider the proposed budget.
(E) The president signs or vetoes the various appropriations bills passed by Congress.

28. The main reason why the popular vote and the electoral vote for president may be very different is
(A) the prevalence of horse-trading and corruption in American politics
(B) the candidates focus their campaigns only on a few swing states
(C) small states have more power in the Electoral College than their population would merit
(D) electors often switch votes to vote for the winning candidate to gain political influence and advance their careers
(E) the winner-take-all system most states use in selecting electors

29. The decision of the Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade was based on
(A) the Free-Exercise Clause of the First Amendment
(B) the right to privacy stated in the Bill of Rights
(C) the right to privacy implied in the Bill of Rights
(D) the right to privacy established in Lawrence v. Texas
(E) the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment

30. Which of the following federal courts have/have original jurisdiction?
(A) The Supreme Court and U.S. District Courts
(B) U.S. District Courts and U.S. Courts of Appeal
(C) U.S. Courts of Appeal only
(D) U.S. District Courts only
(E) State supreme courts
31. The "Elastic Clause" of the Constitution
(A) held the union together by setting up a bicameral Congress—a compromise between large and small states that allowed equal representation in one house and representation based on population in the other house
(B) provides that a state's representation in Congress will go up or down every ten years based on a new national census
(C) gives the president the authority to assume greater power in a time of war
(D) states that powers not specifically given to the national government are reserved to the states or the people
(E) states that the national government’s powers include implied powers not specifically listed in the Constitution

32. The chief accomplishment of the Anti-Federalists in the debate over the Constitution was the
(A) Great Compromise creating a bicameral legislative branch
(B) the establishment of a national bank
(C) the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution
(D) the precedent established by George Washington that the president should be limited to two terms in office
(E) the establishment of the system of electoral votes to select the president, rather than the people themselves

33. Which statement below best describes an open primary?
(A) The election is open to all candidates who want on the ballot, not just those approved by the party leadership.
(B) Voters can cross party lines voting for candidates of different parties in the primary election.
(C) The voting booths are open and the secret ballot is not used.
(D) It is a primary election in which voters can vote during a specified period of time rather than just on Election Day.
(E) Voters can choose which party's primary election ballot they want to use to vote.

34. Which one of the following statements does NOT correctly describe administrative law?
(A) Administrative law is law written by federal agencies rather than Congress.
(B) Administrative law does not have the full force of law that statutory law has.
(C) Administrative law can be overturned by the Supreme Court.
(D) Congress can overturn administrative law by passing statutory laws.
(E) Administrative law is written to carry out or enforce statutory laws.

35. What role does Congress play in amending the Constitution?
(A) Congress submits amendments to the states for their approval.
(B) Congress approves or rejects amendments supported by two-thirds of the states.
(C) The Senate approves proposed amendments by a two-thirds vote, but the House plays little role in the process.
(D) Congress passes amendments by a two-thirds vote, sending them to the president for his signature or veto.
(E) Congress plays no formal role; the Constitution is amended by the states.

36. Which of the following statements are (is) supported by the data in the table above?
I. The size of the federal government in terms of number of federal employees continues to grow.
II. The size of the federal government in terms of number of employees declined between 1970 and 2008.
III. The number of federal government employees has declined each year since 1990.
IV. Federal government workers in 2008 comprised less than half the share of the U.S. labor force that they did in 1970.
(A) I only
(B) II only
(C) IV only
(D) II and III only
(E) II and IV only

37. In a congressional race, the news media are LEAST likely to focus on
(A) which candidate is ahead in the polls
(B) in-depth reporting on the issues on which the candidates disagree
(C) negative statements made by one candidate about the other
(D) any scandal or accusations of scandal involving a candidate
(E) blunders a candidate makes
38. What is grassroots lobbying?
(A) an interest group encouraging and organizing its members to contact their representatives in Congress in support of the interest group’s policy goals
(B) a public relations campaign an interest group undertakes to change the opinions of ordinary citizens
(C) an effort by an interest group to increase its membership
(D) lobbying by community groups when no national interest group has been formed
(E) a campaign by the interest group’s members to change the position of the interest group’s leadership on proposed legislation

39. Which one of the following statements does NOT help explain why incumbents in the House of Representatives usually get reelected?
(A) Incumbents can take credit for bringing federal projects to their district.
(B) Incumbents usually have better name recognition since they’ve been on the ballot before.
(C) Incumbents have had time to build support through constituent service.
(D) Incumbents almost always reflect the views of their constituents better than challengers.
(E) Incumbents have a fund-raising advantage.

40. Which one of the following statements is best supported by the data in the table above?
(A) Between 1990 and 2009, federal grants to state and local governments increased in all program areas shown in the table.
(B) Total federal grants to state and local governments increased fivefold between 1990 and 2009.
(C) In 2009, nearly half of all federal grants to state and local governments were in the category of health.
(D) Between 1990 and 2009 federal grants in most program areas experienced dramatic increases, with several categories exceeding increases of 1,000 percent (10 times).
(E) Between 1990 and 2009, federal grants to state and local governments in the category of energy increased every year.
41. What new interpretation of the Constitution did the Supreme Court use in *District of Columbia v. Heller*?
(A) The Second Amendment prohibits state and federal governments from requiring the registration of firearms.
(B) Federal and state laws restricting some people, such as convicted felons from purchasing guns, violate the Second Amendment.
(C) The wording of the Second Amendment means that the constitutional right to gun ownership applies only to people serving in a state militia.
(D) The Second Amendment contains a constitutional right to gun ownership irrespective of service in a state militia.
(E) The right of privacy implied in the Bill of Rights extends to carrying of guns in public places.

42. Which one of the following is an action that does NOT involve participation in the political process?
(A) creating a blog to write about politics
(B) contacting a senator to get help in getting a veteran’s benefit that you believe you are entitled to
(C) reading about politics in the newspaper
(D) giving money to a PAC
(E) signing a petition on the Internet supporting the repeal of a law

43. The most important influence in determining a person’s political party identification is the person’s
(A) friends
(B) parents
(C) colleagues at work
(D) teachers
(E) religious leaders

44. The president can influence legislation under consideration by Congress by all of the following actions EXCEPT
(A) speaking out to influence public opinion
(B) talking to members of Congress and applying political pressure
(C) threatening to veto legislation unless certain changes are made
(D) sending key members of his staff or cabinet to testify before Congress or speak to the press in support of the president’s position
(E) threatening to issue an executive order that would prohibit enforcement of the legislation if it is passed

45. Which of the following statements is best supported by the data in the table above?
(A) Adjusted for inflation, defense spending more than doubled between 1960 and 2010.
(B) Defense spending, measured in current dollars, increased during each ten-year period shown in the table.
(C) Between 1990 and 2010 defense spending increased by all measures shown in the table.
(D) Between 1960 and 2010, defense spending decreased from over half of total federal spending to less than one-fifth.
(E) As a percentage of GDP, defense spending in 2010 was the lowest ever during the period shown in the chart.
46. What is the purpose of congressional earmarks?
   (A) to require the government to spend money on a specific project
   (B) to provide the funding required for entitlement programs
   (C) to provide a tax loophole for a specific corporation
   (D) to allow for deficit spending rather than balancing the federal budget
   (E) to give the president more discretionary funds that can be channeled to where the money is most needed

47. Which of the following is a value of American political culture?
   (A) the belief in limited government
   (B) the belief that the government has grown too big
   (C) the belief that the government spends too much on entitlement programs
   (D) the belief that government needs to do more to control big corporations
   (E) the opinion that the U.S. border with Mexico is not secure

48. Which of the following statements is NOT supported by the data in the table above?
   (A) Third party candidates for president have little chance of winning.
   (B) Third party candidates for president, even when they win nearly 20 percent of the popular vote, may not get any electoral votes.
   (C) Third party candidates can never get enough electoral votes to play a role in selecting the president.
   (D) Third parties and third party candidates seldom remain a long-term force in American politics.
   (E) Third party candidates periodically emerge that get over 5 percent of the popular vote.

49. In which landmark Supreme Court decision was the right to an attorney extended to require the government to provide lawyers for indigent defendants in state courts?
   (A) Miranda v. Arizona
   (B) Gideon v. Wainwright
   (C) Engle v. Vitale
   (D) Baker v. Carr
   (E) Mapp v. Ohio

50. To influence the Judicial Branch of the U.S. government, an interest group can do all of the following EXCEPT
   (A) file an amicus curiae brief
   (B) lobby the Senate in opposition to a nominee for the Supreme Court
   (C) file a lawsuit
   (D) meet privately with a federal judge regarding a case
   (E) meet with the president to discuss possible nominees to the Supreme Court

51. According to the term limits imposed by the Constitution
   (A) The president cannot be elected to the office of the president more than twice.
   (B) The president and vice president cannot serve more than two terms in office.
   (C) The president and his cabinet cannot serve more than eight years in office.
   (D) The president cannot be elected to more than four terms of office (as Franklin Roosevelt was).
   (E) There are no limits on the number of terms a president may serve but by tradition, since George Washington’s refusal to serve a third term, presidents only serve two terms.

52. Which one of the following statements is NOT supported by the data in the table above?
   (A) During the time period shown, candidates challenging incumbents in the U.S. House of Representatives, on the average, did not spend as much on their campaigns as incumbents did.
   (B) Democratic candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives, on the average, spent more on their campaigns than Republican candidates in 2008.
   (C) Campaign spending on elections for seats in the U.S. House of Representatives increased substantially between 2004 and 2008.
   (D) For the elections shown in the table, nearly all campaign spending was done by candidates of the two major political parties.
   (E) During the time period shown, about half of all campaign spending on elections for the U.S. House of Representatives was spent in campaigns for open seats.
53. What is eminent domain?
   (A) the supremacy of the federal government over state governments
   (B) the legal document issued when a higher court decides to review a decision of a lower court
   (C) the legal term referring to the Supreme Court’s remanding of a case to a lower court for a retrial
   (D) a requirement imposed by the federal government on state governments such as requiring that public buildings be accessible to persons with disabilities
   (E) the power of government to take private property for public use

54. Which of the following actions can Congress take if it is unhappy with the actions of a federal agency?
   I. Hold congressional hearings to investigate the actions of the agency
   II. Restrict or eliminate the agency’s funding
   III. Pass a new law restricting the operations of the agency
   IV. Issue an executive order requiring the agency to take certain actions
   (A) III only
   (B) I and II only
   (C) II and III only
   (D) I, II, and III only
   (E) I, II, III, and IV

55. Which one of the following is a provision contained in the Constitution?
   (A) The Supreme Court has the power to declare a law unconstitutional.
   (B) The justices of the Supreme Court serve life terms.
   (C) The Supreme Court consists of eight associate justices and one chief justice.
   (D) Supreme Court justices cannot be impeached.
   (E) The U.S. District Courts are courts of original jurisdiction in the federal judicial system.

56. Which of the following groups is most likely to vote for the Democratic candidates for president?
   (A) African Americans
   (B) households in which no one is a member of a labor union
   (C) males
   (D) people over age 55
   (E) females

57. Which of the following is NOT a factor the president generally takes into account in nominating a person for Supreme Court justice?
   (A) whether or not the person can be confirmed in the Senate
   (B) the age of the person
   (C) the political party the person belongs to
   (D) whether public opinion will be favorable towards the person nominated
   (E) whether the person has held elective office before

58. After a bill is introduced in the House of Representatives, what is the next step in the legislative process?
   (A) The bill is introduced in the Senate because both houses of Congress must consider all proposed legislation.
   (B) The bill is referred to a committee.
   (C) The majority-party caucus votes whether or not to support the bill.
   (D) The Speaker of the House decides whether to ignore the bill or take action.
   (E) The bill dies unless a committee chair decides to “mark up” the bill.

59. Which of the following is an example of fiscal federalism?
   (A) administering the national parks
   (B) patrolling costal shipping lanes
   (C) building new mass transit systems in urban areas
   (D) administering veteran’s hospitals
   (E) patrolling U.S. borders

60. Which one of the following statements best describes the prevailing view of the power of the president today?
   (A) The president is primarily an administrator carrying out the will of Congress.
   (B) The president can take whatever action he feels appropriate to advance his policy goals as long as he doesn’t break the law or violate the Constitution.
   (C) The president is the voice of the nation but cannot take any important actions on his own without the approval of Congress.
   (D) The president is above the law and can pursue the policies he believes in even if that means he must break a law.
   (E) The president, in a national crisis such as a war on terror, can take whatever actions he deems necessary even if it means violating the Constitution.