

Checkpoint #1: Background & Constitution

1. What is the difference between a direct and indirect democracy?
2. John Locke developed the idea of the Social Contract. What is this and what impact did it have on the development of the American political system?
3. There are three theories that explain how politics works within a democracy. Briefly explain each...
 - a. Elite Theory-
 - b. Pluralism-
 - c. Participatory--
4. Of the 3 theories that you used defined in #3, which do you feel most accurately reflects the current state of democracy within the United States. Provide your rationale.
5. Describe the basic setup of the Articles of Confederation system.

6. List 4 problems that existed with the government during the Articles of Confederation time period.

1-

2-

3-

4-

7. How could it be argued that there would never have been a Constitutional Convention in 1787 without Shays Rebellion in 1786?

8. How did the New Jersey and Virginia Plans differ in the way that they wanted Congressional representation to work in the new government?

9. How did the Great Compromise resolve the differences between the New Jersey and Virginia Plans?

10. How could it be argued that the 3/5 Compromise solved a government problem but created another?

11. How did the Federalists and Anti-Federalists disagree over the proposed Constitution?

12. The Constitution is based on three significant principles: federalism, separation of powers, and checks & balances. Which do you think is most vital to preserving American democracy?

CHECKPOINT #2: FEDERALISM

1. Complete the chart below.

	Unitary Government	Federal Government	Confederate Government
Definition			
Strengths			
Weaknesses			

2. What is the basic idea behind the 10th amendment and how was its significance later undermined by the Supreme Court's interpretation of the necessary and proper clause?
3. What are examples of powers that only the national governments possess?
4. What are examples of powers that only the state governments possess?
5. What are examples of powers that are shared by the national and state governments?
6. What was the impact of the Marshall court on the balance of power between the national government and the states? (hint: McCulloch v. Maryland)

7. What is the difference between dual (layer cake) and cooperative federalism (marble cake)?
8. Fiscal federalism involves the national government's use of money to influence the actions of the states. Define the following terms:
- a. Would states rather take advantage of block or categorical grants? Explain.
 - b. How is the Americans With Disabilities Act (1990) an example of an unfunded mandate?
9. What was devolution and who encouraged it?
10. Complete the chart below.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Federalism		

Checkpoint #3: THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

1. What are the 3 formal requirements to be President?
2. What are some informal requirements to be President?
3. Complete the Electoral College review chart below.

Question	Answer
What 2 things added together create a state's assigned electoral number?	
What is the minimum number of electoral votes needed to win the Presidency?	
If no candidate receives the minimum number of electoral votes, who decides the election?	
Describe two reasons that support keeping the Electoral College system.	
How could it be argued that the Electoral College depresses voter turnout?	
How does the current Electoral College system hurt the viability of 3rd parties?	

4. Why do you think the Supreme Court took the line-item veto power away from American Presidents?
5. Why are vetoes more likely to occur during times of divided government?
6. Complete the chart budget terms chart below.

	Definition	Example
Discretionary Spending		
Entitlement Spending		

7. What was accomplished by the following pieces of campaign finance reform legislation?

a. 1972-Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)

b. 2002-Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA or McCain-Feingold)

8. Complete the chart below by explaining how each has served to increase Presidential power.

	How does this increase Presidential power?
Executive Orders	
Signing Statements	
Executive Agreements	
Executive Privilege	

9. Congressional laws can be passed to limit Presidential power. Explain how the War Powers Act Resolution is an example of this.

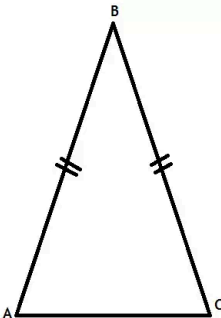
10. Why is it easier for the President to use the “bully pulpit” than a member of Congress?

11. How did the Pendleton Act attempt to end the problems caused by the patronage/spoils system?

12. Complete the following chart by providing an example of each component of the bureaucracy.

Component	Example
Cabinet	
Independent Executive Agency	
Independent Regulatory Commission	
Government Corporation	

13. Label the 3 points of an IRON TRIANGLE.

	<p>A-</p> <p>B-</p> <p>C-</p> <hr/> <p>Why do many political scientists argue that this model is too simplistic?</p>
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14. Why do some believe that bureaucratic agencies have too much power? (think back to terms like Bureaucratic discretion, Rule making, and Administrative adjudication)

Checkpoint #4: THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

1. Why is public approval of Congress so low?
2. Identify 2 reasons that the Founders chose to model our legislature on a bicameral system?
3. Complete the chart below that focuses on the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate.

	House or Reps	Senate
Total # of members		
How many members from the individual states?		
Minimum age to be elected		
Length of term		
Which can filibuster? (place an X)		
Which decides Presidential elections if no candidate receives a majority of the electoral vote?		
Which can issue a discharge petition?		
Which confirms Presidential appointments?		
Which declares war?		
Which proposes amendments?		
Which always debates financial/tax bills first?		
Which has a special Rules Committee?		

4. Why do you believe that some people believe that gerrymandering is the single biggest problem facing Congress today?

5. What is an INCUMBENT? What advantages do they have?

6. Why is the committee system important to both Congress as an organization and individual members of Congress?

7. Who am I? (think models of representation)

I am a member of Congress that always bases my vote on what my constituents want.	
I am a member of Congress that always tends to base my vote on what I think is personally right.	
I am a member of Congress that always bases my vote on how the party leadership tells me to vote.	
I am a member of Congress that frequently mixes up the factors that I take into consideration before voting.	

8. What is Congress's role in the budget process?
- 9.
10. How does Congress use its powers of oversight and investigation?