

CONSTITUTION 101

Module 1: Constitutional Conversations and Civil Dialogue

1.7 Test Your Knowledge

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVERSATIONS AND CIVIL DIALOGUE

Complete the questions in the following quiz to test your knowledge of basic ideas and concepts covered in this module.

1. What is the U.S. Constitution?
 - a. The supreme law of the land in America
 - b. A document declaring independence from Great Britain
 - c. A source of much debate and discussion among Americans
 - d. Both A and C
2. The Constitution is not a particularly long document (the Preamble, seven articles, and 27 amendments). The Founding generation wrote it that way so _____.
 - a. Only wealthy elites could own a copy
 - b. Everyone, lawyer and nonlawyer alike, could read it and understand it
 - c. The new laws would be confusing and difficult to understand
 - d. To save money on the ink needed to print it
3. The Constitution expresses one of its core principles, popular sovereignty, in its Preamble, beginning with these words: _____.
 - a. We the People
 - b. Four score and seven years ago
 - c. We hold these truths to be self-evident
 - d. Of the people, by the people, for the people
4. The framers set out the basic structure of government—in other words, its three different branches—in Articles I through III. In order, match the three different branches (1. Legislative, 2. Executive, 3. Judicial) with its constitutional responsibility.
 - a. 1. Enforcing the laws, 2. Interpreting the laws, 3. Making the laws
 - b. 1. Interpreting the laws, 2. Making the laws, 3. Enforcing the laws
 - c. 1. Making the laws, 2. Enforcing the laws, 3. Interpreting the laws
 - d. The framers really didn't want a separation of powers
5. Article V outlines a formal process that has allowed later generations to revise the Constitution without the need to resort to violence or revolution. This process is called _____.
 - a. The Impeachment Process
 - b. The Amendment Process
 - c. The Midterm Elections
 - d. Judicial Review

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6. Some of our most cherished liberties, such as free speech, free press, freedom of religion, and the right to a jury trial, were not listed in the original Constitution. Rather, they were added in 1791 with the adoption of the _____.
 - a. Northwest Ordinance
 - b. Articles of Confederation
 - c. Continental Association
 - d. Bill of Rights

7. After the Civil War, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments abolished slavery, wrote the Declaration of Independence's promise of freedom and equality into the Constitution, and banned racial discrimination in voting. This period, which some historians call America's "Second Founding" is also known as _____.
 - a. Reconstruction
 - b. Antebellum
 - c. The Progressive Era
 - d. The New Deal

8. The key to thinking like a constitutional lawyer is to separate your political views (what *should* be done) from your constitutional views (what *can* be done). Which of these would be an example of a constitutional question?
 - a. Should the government raise your taxes?
 - b. Does the federal government have the power to pass a law to raise your taxes?
 - c. Should the government lower your taxes?
 - d. Should wealthy corporations pay more in taxes?

9. Phillip Bobbitt's landmark book *Constitutional Fate* identifies *seven* different forms of argument used by constitutional lawyers. When having a civil dialogue, it is important to be aware of these different arguments because _____.
 - a. You can criticize someone who uses a different interpretive method than you
 - b. It is easier to tell people that they are wrong
 - c. Even judges and constitutional lawyers don't always agree on the Constitution's meaning
 - d. You can prove that you are smarter than everyone else

10. Someone who is using a *Textual Interpretation* would most likely try to _____.
 - a. Use the Constitution's text to understand the best reading of the Constitution's text at the time the provision was added to the Constitution
 - b. Use only modern resources
 - c. Use any text they can find, even if it has nothing to do with the Constitution
 - d. Use sources that were first published on the internet

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11. If someone is interpreting a constitutional provision by examining records from the 1787 Convention, discussions in state ratifying conventions, and late 18th-century newspapers and pamphlets, they are most likely using which method of interpretation?
 - a. Doctrine
 - b. Prudence
 - c. History
 - d. Moral

12. When having a constitutional conversation with someone, you should try to _____.
 - a. Make sure that you are asking constitutional, not political questions
 - b. Always ask only “yes or no” questions
 - c. Try to incorporate scholarly work into your answers
 - d. Both A and C

13. Which of these *should* you do when having a constitutional conversation?
 - a. Use vague ideas that are only loosely connected to the question.
 - b. Talk about scholarly ideas without referring to the author or work by name.
 - c. Remember to explain what the information you are citing means.
 - d. Forget to connect your evidence to the bigger picture and/or essential question.

14. Which of the following do you think is true about the nature of discussions between justices of the Supreme Court?
 - a. The justices occasionally shout at each other.
 - b. The justices are rude to each other.
 - c. Their conversations are civil, polite, and professional, even if they strongly disagree.
 - d. Justices will try to put each other down.

15. Justice Stephen Breyer talked about how the Supreme Court settles arguments and how their method can work for you, too. What was Justice Breyer’s advice?
 - a. Stay calm and listen to others.
 - b. It’s okay to get angry if it intimidates your opponent.
 - c. Don’t listen to what others are saying if you know you are right.
 - d. Focus only on what you are saying, not on what others are saying.

16. A tip for having a conversation with a group of people: “Don’t speak twice until everyone has spoken once.” This is a great rule for _____ because everyone feels that they’ve been treated fairly.
 - a. Justices of the Supreme Court only
 - b. Whatever group you’re involved in
 - c. Members of Congress only
 - d. Members of your school’s debate team only

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17. The only way that the government can be responsive to the will of “We the People” is if the people are free to express _____.
- Perspectives that everyone can agree with
 - Perspectives that are popular
 - Only perspectives of the political party in power
 - All perspectives, even those that people might disagree with
18. In the Supreme Court case of *Whitney v. California*, the importance of civil dialogue was emphasized by this justice.
- John Marshall
 - Louis Brandeis
 - Earl Warren
 - Thurgood Marshall
19. According to Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was the Constitution made for?
- Kings and tyrants
 - People who can always agree on everything
 - People with fundamentally differing views
 - Only those who had served in the military
20. The people who should be having conversations about our Constitution are _____.
- Supreme Court justices
 - Members of national, state, and local governments
 - Ordinary citizens regardless of profession or background
 - All of the above

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Answer Key

1. D
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. B
6. D
7. A
8. B
9. C
10. A
11. C
12. D
13. C
14. C
15. A
16. B
17. D
18. B
19. C
20. D

