

## **Lessons 1A and B - American History: The Colonial Period and Independence**

- 1. Lessons 1A and B. American History: The Colonial Period and Independence.**  
Lesson 1 covers American history from the Colonial Period until the end of the Revolutionary War. Lesson 1A is about the first European immigrants and the Colonial Period. Lesson 1B explains why the original colonies declared independence from Great Britain and how they won the Revolutionary War.
- 2. Lesson 1A. The Colonial Period.**  
The Colonial Period is the time from the first European settlements in the early 1600s until 1776, when the 13 original states declared their independence from Great Britain.
3. Christopher Columbus was an Italian navigator and explorer. For centuries, Europe bought spices and beautiful fabrics from Asia. However, the eastern trade route was very long and Columbus believed if he sailed west he could reach China and India more quickly. In 1492, the King of Spain gave Columbus three ships to sail west.
4. The black arrows show the traditional way to India around Africa. The orange arrow shows the route Columbus used to try to get to Asia more quickly.
5. Columbus, of course, did not find a shorter route to Asia. Instead, he landed in the Bahamas and on Cuba and thus 'discovered' America. However, as you can see on the right side of the picture, people were already living here when Columbus arrived. These people are now referred to as either Native Americans or American Indians. Even though people already lived in America, Europeans quickly settled in "the new world" and celebrated Columbus' arrival with a holiday. In the United States Columbus Day was made a national holiday in 1937.
- 6. Question 59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?**
7. American Indians, or Native Americans, lived in America before the Europeans arrived.
8. Around the beginning of the 1600s, immigrants from Great Britain began founding colonies in America. Colonists came to America for many reasons including political, religious and economic freedom. Others came to escape persecution. In 1607, the first permanent British colony was created in Virginia. Most members of that colony came for economic reasons. The second successful colony was in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Plymouth was started by Pilgrims who came here for religious freedom. They sailed over on the *Mayflower* in 1620.
- 9. Question 58. What is one reason colonists came to America?**
10. Freedom. Colonists came to America for freedom. This idea includes political freedom, religious freedom, economic opportunity, and to escape persecution.

11. Europeans came to America in search of freedom, but at the same time tens of thousands of Africans were brought here against their will and forced to work without pay or rights of any kind. These people are called slaves. By the end of the Colonial Period over 300,000 slaves had been brought to America. This advertisement for a slave sale was placed in a Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper in 1760.
12. **Question 60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?**
13. Africans, or people from Africa, were taken to America and sold as slaves.
14. Relations between the colonists and American Indians were not always friendly. Villages on both sides were sometimes attacked and as more colonists came, violence became more common. Eventually, as America expanded west, many American Indian tribes were forced live far from their original homes in separate areas called reservations.
15. However, the most famous example of peaceful relations between colonists and Native Americans is the holiday Thanksgiving. This holiday originated in the colony of Plymouth, Massachusetts. In 1620, over 100 Pilgrims sailed from England for America. Their first winter in America, half of the Pilgrims died. The next year a Native American tribe taught them how to farm. The colonists were very grateful and after their first successful harvest they invited the Native Americans to a feast. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln made Thanksgiving an official holiday. He wanted it to be a day when Americans give thanks for what they have.
16. There are over 500 Native American tribes in the United States. Two of the largest tribes in Connecticut are the Mohegan and Pequot. Some other tribes in the U.S. are the Cherokee, Crow, and Navajo.
17. **Question 87. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.**
18. This page lists the names of twenty-two American Indian tribes, including the three mentioned on the previous page. Pequot is not on this list, but a correct answer as well. Your interviewer will have a complete list of recognized Native American tribes.
19. During the Colonial Period, 500,000 European immigrants came to America. By 1732, there were 13 colonies along the east coast. In 1776, the colonies declared independence from Great Britain and became the first 13 states in the United States of America. At that time, New England contained only four states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. In 1777, Vermont split from New Hampshire and in 1820 Maine separated from Massachusetts.
20. **Question 64. There were 13 original states. Name three.**

21. Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island were all original states. All three are next to each other. Three other original states are New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
22. **Lesson 1B. Independence.**

This lesson explains how the 13 colonies won their independence from Great Britain. Years of growing tension between the colonies and Great Britain eventually led to the Revolutionary War and the creation of an independent United States of America.
23. Great Britain was ruled by a king and a parliament. The King, George the Third, was the ruler. He inherited his power from his parents, he was not elected. Britain also had a parliament similar to the U.S. Congress, but American colonists had no representation in it.
24. During the colonial period, Great Britain fought several wars against Native Americans and the French to defend the 13 colonies. At the same time, they were also fighting wars in Europe. To help pay for these wars, Great Britain had the colonists pay more taxes. However, since Americans had no representation in Parliament, they complained that this was "taxation without representation" and therefore unfair. The colonists wanted more self-government and control over their own laws and basic rights.
25. When a tax was placed on tea in 1773, many colonists stopped buying tea. Later that year some colonists in Massachusetts protested by throwing three boatloads of tea into the water. This is now known as The Boston Tea Party.
26. After the Boston Tea Party, relations between the colonists and Great Britain continued to get worse. In 1774, the British Parliament passed new laws to "punish" the Boston protesters. These laws put the Massachusetts government under British control and allowed British troops to live in people's houses (quartering). Protests continued, and the next year the British attacked two towns outside of Boston and began the Revolutionary War.
27. **Question 61. Why did the colonists fight the British?**
28. The colonists fought the British because of high taxes (taxation without representation), because the British army stayed in their houses (quartering), and because they didn't have the right to choose their own leaders (self-government).
29. Great Britain had the largest army and navy in the world, but America had only a small army and no navy. An army officer named George Washington was chosen to command the American army. It was very difficult to build an army, but Washington proved a great leader and eventually led the American army to victory.
30. In 1776, the colonial government asked the 13 colonies to each create a new government

independent of Great Britain. This act made it necessary for the United States to declare independence from England. Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write the document and on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the colonial government. The United States had been born. Like Columbus Day, the 4th of July is also an official holiday. It is called Independence Day.

31. **Question 62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?**

32. Thomas Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.

33. **Question 63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?**

34. July 4, 1776. The Declaration of Independence was adopted on July 4, 1776.

35. **Question 8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?**

36. The Declaration of Independence announced our independence (from Great Britain).

- It declared our independence (from Great Britain).
- It said that the United States is free (from Great Britain).

37. The Declaration of Independence begins by stating the "self-evident truths" that "all men are created equal" and have certain "unalienable rights" including "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It also lists 27 complaints against King George III and the British Parliament to show how the colonies have been denied these rights and self-government.

38. **Question 9. What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?**

39. Some rights from the Declaration of Independence include

- life
- liberty
- and the pursuit of happiness

40. The signers of the Declaration of Independence are now considered some of America's Founding Fathers. This group includes Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams. Other Founding Fathers, like George Washington and James Madison, did not sign the Declaration of Independence, but helped write the U.S. Constitution.

41. Benjamin Franklin was one of the most influential Founding Fathers. In addition to being the oldest member of the Constitutional Convention, he was a U.S. diplomat, the first Postmaster General of the United States, and he started the first free libraries. He also the writer of "Poor Richard's Almanac." An almanac is a book of practical information such as weather forecasts, household tips, proverbs, and dates for planting different crops.

42. **Question 99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?**

43. July 4. Independence Day is celebrated on July 4.

44. **Question 100. Name two national U.S. holidays.**

45. This lesson explained the origins of Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, and Independence Day. Other holidays will be explained in later lessons.

46. Benjamin Franklin is sometimes referred to as "the First American" because he was one of the first leaders to talk about the need for colonial unity. This drawing is America's first political cartoon. Franklin drew it in 1754 to urge the colonies to unite against attacks by Native Americans and the French. The cartoon was used again during the Revolutionary War as a call for unity. The 13 colonies had to fight together to win, and by doing so, began to see themselves as a single nation, not a group of separate states.

47. During the Revolutionary War, Great Britain fought the colonists throughout the 13 colonies. After almost two years, the Americans had lost most of the battles and the troops began to lose hope. Then, in the winter of 1776, George Washington made a bold decision. He crossed the Delaware River and made a surprise attack on British troops in Trenton, New Jersey, thus winning a big battle, and restoring the morale of the American army.

48. The 13 original states needed help to win the war. Benjamin Franklin was Ambassador to France and, along with Thomas Jefferson, he asked the French to assist the United States. In 1778, after an important American victory in Saratoga, New York, France agreed to fight alongside the Americans. Later, Spain and Holland also joined.

49. **Question 68. What was one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?**

50. Benjamin Franklin was one of the most influential of the United States' Founding Fathers. He is famous for being a U.S. diplomat. He was also the oldest member of the Constitutional Convention, the first Postmaster General of the United States, the writer of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, and he started the first free libraries.

51. With three European allies helping the Americans, Britain could not win the war. In 1781, a large British force was defeated and surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia, essentially bringing the war to an end. However, fighting continued for two more years until a peace treaty was finally signed in 1783. In this painting George Washington is accepting the surrender of the British General Cornwallis at Yorktown.

52. George Washington was U.S. commander during the Revolutionary War and the country's first President. For these reasons, George Washington is considered "the Father of Our Country." Like others who either signed the Declaration of Independence or helped write

the U.S. Constitution, George Washington is also considered one of the Founding Fathers. He was so important during the creation of the United States that he was known as "the indispensable man."

53. **Question 69. Who is the "Father of Our Country"?**

54. Washington. The "Father of Our Country" is George Washington.

## **Lesson 2 - American Government: Principles of American Democracy**

### **1. Lesson 2. American Government: Principles of American Democracy.**

This lesson explains the principles of American democracy. Understanding the principles of American government can help you better understand the American political process.

2. After the Revolutionary War it was clear that the United States needed a stronger government. In 1787, a convention was held in Philadelphia to decide what changes should be made. For five months, many Founding Fathers - including James Madison, George Washington, and the convention's oldest member, Benjamin Franklin - debated and wrote the U.S. Constitution. This very important convention is now known as the Constitutional Convention.
3. Benjamin Franklin was one of the most influential Founding Fathers. In addition to being the oldest member of the Constitutional Convention, he was a U.S. diplomat, the first Postmaster General of the United States, and he started the first free libraries. He also the writer of "Poor Richard's Almanac." An almanac is a book of practical information such as weather forecasts, household tips, proverbs, and dates for planting different crops.
4. **Question 65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?**
5. The Constitution was written at the Constitutional Convention.
  - The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution at the Constitutional Convention.
6. **Question 66. When was the Constitution written?**
7. 1787. The Constitution was written in 1787.
8. **Question 68. What was one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?**
9. Benjamin Franklin is famous for being a U.S. diplomat, the oldest member of the Constitutional Convention, the first Postmaster General of the United States, and the writer of "Poor Richard's Almanac." He also started the first free libraries.
10. The Constitution sets up the government, defines its powers and structure, and protects the basic rights of Americans. In this way, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. As the supreme law in the United States, the Constitution is above any state or federal law.
11. **Question 1. What is the supreme law of the land?**
12. The Constitution. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. As the supreme law in the United States, the Constitution is above any state or federal law.

**13. Question 2. What does the Constitution do?**

**14. The Constitution**

- sets up the government
- defines the government
- and protects the basic rights of Americans

**15.** The Constitution sets up a government with three branches: a legislative, an executive, and a judicial. The legislative branch is also called Congress and consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The executive branch, or the President, consists of the President, Vice President and cabinet. The judicial branch refers to the courts. The highest court in the nation is the Supreme Court.

**16. Question 13. Name one branch or part of the government.**

**17.** The three parts of the U.S. government are:

- Congress, which is also called the legislative
- the President, also known as the executive
- and the courts, or the judicial branch

**18.** The Founding Fathers did not want any part of the government to become too powerful. So, they created a government with three branches and gave each branch separate and clearly defined powers. This is called separation of powers. The Constitution also includes a system of checks and balances which allows one part of government to "check" another. For example, Congress can reject a treaty signed by the president, the president can reject bills from Congress, and the Supreme Court can declare a law to be unconstitutional. The combination of a separation of powers and a system of checks and balances works to limit the power of government and to protect individual rights.

**19. Question 14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?**

**20.** The separation of powers and system of checks and balances. The separation of powers and system of checks and balances keep one branch of government from becoming too powerful.

**21.** The Founding Fathers also created a federal system of government to prevent the national government from becoming too powerful. The U.S. federal system has a central government at the top and separate state governments below. By creating a broader government, federalism encourages experimentation and keeps the government close to the people. The federal and state governments share some powers such as establishing courts, making laws and collecting taxes. Other powers though belong to only one government or the other. Under the Constitution, some powers granted to the federal



government are the ability to print money, create an army, declare war, and make treaties with other countries. However, to protect states' rights and individual rights, the 10th Amendment to the Constitution says that any powers not given to the federal government belong to the states.

**22.** Some powers that belong to the states include providing schooling and education, providing protection, and providing safety. Protection is police departments, and safety means fire departments. States also give a driver's license, and approve zoning and land use. Zoning and land use determines how land is used. This includes what types of buildings can be built and how they can be used.

**23. Question 41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?**

**24.** Some powers that belong to the federal government are the powers to

- print money
- declare war
- create an army
- and make treaties

**25. Question 42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?**

**26.** Some powers that belong to states are to

- provide schooling and education
- provide protection
- provide safety
- give a driver's license
- and approve zoning and land use

**27.** James Madison was the most influential member of the Constitutional Congress and considered "the Father of the Constitution." He was also a Federalist. Federalists believed a strong central government was necessary to unite and protect Americans and to properly conduct the country's foreign affairs.

**28.** Anti-Federalists, like Thomas Jefferson (who wrote the Declaration of Independence), believed a big government would endanger states' rights and personal liberty. Anti-Federalists also worried that the president could become as powerful as a king.

**29.** Nine states had to accept the Constitution before the new government could be set up. In New York, Anti-Federalist feeling was particularly strong. In response, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay wrote *The Federalist Papers*, a collection of 85 essays

explaining the new Constitution, its form of government and the system of checks and balances. Although Madison, Hamilton, and Jay wrote all the essays, most were published anonymously under the name Publius. In the end, all 13 states voted in support of the new constitution. It is unclear how much influence *The Federalist Papers* had on New York or other states, but the essays are still read today for their interpretation of the Constitution.

**30. Question 67. *The Federalist Papers* supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.**

**31.** Madison, Hamilton, and Jay. The three authors of *The Federalist Papers* are James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay. However, most of the essays were published anonymously under the name Publius.

**32.** Once the new Constitution was accepted, a president had to be chosen. Because of his leadership during the Revolutionary War, George Washington had been made president of the Constitutional Convention. His support for the new Constitution convinced many members to accept the new government. Washington's reputation made him a natural choice for the nation's first president. In fact, some Founding Fathers would only accept him as first president. In 1789, Washington was elected President of the United States by unanimous electoral vote. He served only two terms and then retired. In that way, he set an example that would not be broken until 1941.

**33. Question 69. Who is the "Father of Our Country"?**

**34.** Washington. The "Father of Our Country" is George Washington.

**35. Question 70. Who was the first President?**

**36.** Washington. The first president of the United States was George Washington.

**37.** The Framers of the Constitution included procedures allowing for changes or additions to the Constitution. These are called amendments. So far, 27 amendments have been added to the Constitution, although the 18th Amendment was later repealed. The last amendment was made in 1992.

**38. Question 4. What is an amendment?**

**39.** An amendment is a change or addition to the Constitution.

**40. Question 7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?**

**41.** 27. Twenty-seven amendments have been added to the Constitution so far.

**42.** The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights. The original Constitution defined and set up the government, but did not guarantee any individual rights. Thomas Jefferson wanted a Bill of Rights that sets limits on government power and guarantees certain individual rights. However, James Madison believed the Constitution already offered enough protection and *The Federalist Papers* even contained an essay opposing the idea of a Bill of Rights. However, many Anti-Federalists supported Jefferson's idea, and to get their support for the new Constitution, the Federalists agreed to create a Bill of Rights after the Constitution was accepted. In 1789, Madison wrote the Bill of Rights and in 1791 they became the first ten amendments to the Constitution.

**43. Question 5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?**

**44.** The Bill of Rights. The first ten amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights.

**45.** The First Amendment in the Bill of Rights guarantees five freedoms. These freedoms are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and freedom to petition the government. Freedom of speech means a person may say or otherwise express any idea they wish. Freedom of religion allows someone to practice or not practice a religion. Freedom of assembly is the freedom to gather in a group. Freedom of the press allows newspapers to print whatever they want, including criticism of the government and its leaders. Freedom to petition the government means any citizen can make a complaint to the government.

**46. Question 6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?**

**47.** The First Amendment guarantees five freedoms; freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and freedom to petition the government.

**48. Question 10. What is freedom of religion?**

**49.** Freedom of religion means you can practice any religion you want, or not practice a religion.

**50.** The U.S. government is based on the idea of self-government. The Declaration of Independence states that men are born equal and a nation's citizens, not a king or other ruler, must be allowed to make their own laws. That is why the first three words of the Constitution are "We the people." As President Abraham Lincoln said, the U.S. has "a government of the people, by the people, for the people."

**51. Question 3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?**

**52.** "We the People." The first three words of the Constitution are "We the People" and they express the American idea of self-government.

**53.** The idea of self-government and individual freedom extends to the American economy. Since the first colonists in America, immigrants have always come here for economic opportunity. The economic system of the United States is based on free market capitalism. In capitalism, businesses are privately-owned and operated for profit. In a market economy, what is produced and how much it costs is determined through free competition and the interaction of supply and demand.

**54. Question 11. What is the economic system in the United States?**

**55.** Capitalist. The economic system in the United States is capitalist with a market economy.

**56.** In addition to being a foundation for self-government, the Constitution promotes the rule of law. The rule of law means everyone must obey the laws of the nation. No one is above the law, not individuals, not leaders and not the government. In the words of one Founding Father, the United States is "a government of laws, and not of men."

**57. Question 12. What is the "rule of law"?**

**58.** The rule of law means:

- Everyone must follow the law.
- Leaders must obey the law.
- The government must obey the law.
- No one is above the law.

**59.** As "a government of the people, by the people, for the people," there are many ways a citizen can become involved in their democracy. Such participation is so important that many of these actions are protected by the Constitution. Some ways to participate include:

- voting
- joining a political party, community group, or civic group
- helping with a campaign
- giving an elected official your opinion on an issue
- calling Senators and Representatives
- publicly supporting or opposing an issue or policy
- running for office
- and writing to a newspaper

**60. Question 55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?**

**61.** There are many ways Americans can participate in their democracy including voting, joining various types of groups, helping with a campaign, publicly sharing opinions, and running for office.

### **Lesson 3 - American History: 1800 through the Civil War**

**1. Lesson 3. American History: 1800 through the Civil War.**

This lesson is about American history from the end of the Revolutionary War through the Civil War.

2. The 1800s was a time of great change, growth and turmoil in the United States. In the 1800s, the U.S. fought its first international wars, the country rapidly expanded west, the industrial revolution created great social and economic changes, and the issue of slavery divided the nation and led to a terrible civil war.
3. After the Revolutionary War, the United States quickly expanded westward. This expansion was greatly encouraged in 1803 when President Thomas Jefferson doubled the size of the country by buying Louisiana from France. As a result, settlers quickly moved west. At the same time, even more new territories were created between the 13 original states and the Louisiana Territory.
4. **Question 71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?**
5. Louisiana. The United States bought Louisiana, or the Louisiana Territory, from France in 1803.
6. In the mid-1800s, the westward movement of settlers created problems with Mexico and eventually led to the Mexican-American War. What is now the state of Texas was originally Mexican territory. However, the territory had a small population and was often attacked by Native Americans. To protect the area, Mexico invited American immigrants to settle in Texas. So many people came, that within 10 years Americans were 80% of the population. Mexico then tried to stop the immigration, but couldn't, and a few years later, in 1835, Texas declared its independence. A Mexican army attacked, was defeated, and Mexico agreed to make Texas an independent republic. In 1845, Texas asked to join the United States. The U.S. annexed the territory, Mexico attacked again, and after a series of battles was defeated by the United States.
7. The peace treaty forced Mexico to give up Texas and the rest of her northern territories. Those areas are shown on the map in pink and blue. The United States now stretched across the continent from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west.
8. **Question 89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?**
9. The Pacific. The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean on Earth.
10. **Question 90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?**

11. The Atlantic. The Atlantic Ocean is the most traveled ocean in the world.
12. In 1853, the Gadsden Purchase added more Mexican territory to the United States and created the border we have today. From east to west, the four U.S. states that border Mexico are Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.
13. **Question 93. Name one state that borders Mexico.**
14. California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The four states that border Mexico are Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.
15. Europeans came to America in search of freedom, but at the same time tens of thousands of Africans were brought here **against their will** and forced to work without pay or rights of any kind. These people are called slaves. By the end of the Colonial Period, over 300,000 slaves had been brought to America. This advertisement for a slave sale was placed in a Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper in 1760.
16. **Question 60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?**
17. Africans. Africans, or people from Africa, were taken to America and sold as slaves.
18. The southern states always had more slaves than the northern states. The south has better soil and a better climate, which made farming more profitable. In the north, the soil is not very good, so the farms were small and manufacturing became more important. The combination of small farms and industry made the use of slaves less necessary. In contrast, the southern states primarily grew tobacco and cotton on large plantations. The two crops required a lot of labor to grow and harvest. However, until the late 1700s, cotton was less common because the plant was difficult to process. Before cotton could be made into cloth, all the seeds had to be removed by hand. The process was so slow process one person could clean only a pound of cotton a day.
19. In the 1700s and 1800s, Europe and North America had a period called the Industrial Revolution. This was a time of great advances in agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, and technology. For example, in 1793, a man named Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, a machine that quickly removes the seeds from cotton. The cotton gin is one of the most significant inventions in American history. It transformed the southern economy and society and helped lead America into civil war.
20. This picture shows a cotton gin at the Eli Whitney Museum in Hamden, Connecticut. What made the cotton gin so important was it allowed one person to clean 50 pounds of cotton a day instead of one pound. This changed southern society in two important ways. First, cotton quickly became the main crop. Second, even though it was now much easier to clean cotton, so much more cotton was grown the demand for slaves actually increased. In 1790,

there were 700,000 slaves in the south, by 1850, there were 3.2 million. Congress had banned the importation of slaves in 1807, but the number of slaves in the United States continued to grow because when a slave had a baby, that baby became a slave. As a result, by the early 1800s, the American south had become a slave society.

21. Slavery was already an issue when the U.S. Constitution was written. About half of the Founding Fathers owned slaves. Some of them believed slavery was wrong and should be ended, but to get the new Constitution accepted, they had to compromise and keep slavery legal. Even so, slavery was banned in the Northwest Territory in 1787 and, by 1804, all the northern states had outlawed it. So, the nation was soon divided into free states and slave states. That difference would become more important as slavery became a more serious issue.
22. People who wanted to end slavery were called abolitionists. As slavery became more important in the south, anti-slavery feeling grew, both in the north and parts of the south. In 1827, there were 130 abolitionist organizations in the U.S.; by 1838, there were 1,300 groups with 109,000 members. The same year, 2 million people signed antislavery petitions.
23. Two early issues between the free and slave states were the Underground Railroad and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. Slaves were considered property and it was a state's constitutional responsibility to return runaway slaves to their owners, even if the slaves were in a free state. However, many northern states refused to cooperate and wrote laws protecting escaped slaves. Southern states also complained about the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a series of safe routes and locations used by abolitionists to help tens of thousands of slaves escape to free states, Canada and Mexico.
24. As the U.S. expanded west, the abolitionist and pro-slavery sides argued over the new territories. The question was, "Would they be made into free states or slave states?" During the first half of the 1800s, a series of compromises were attempted. First, when the Louisiana Territory was purchased in 1803, settlers were only allowed to bring the slaves they already owned. New slaves could not be brought in later. Then, in 1820, the Missouri Compromise made Missouri and Arkansas slave states, but prohibited slavery in the northern half of the Louisiana Territory. In 1846, during the Mexican-American war, the Senate refused to ban slavery in any territory acquired from Mexico. That angered abolitionists and eventually led to the Compromise of 1850. This law made California a free state, allowed the New Mexico and Utah Territories to decide if they wanted slavery, created a stronger Fugitive Slave Act, and banned the slave trade, but not slavery, in Washington, D.C.
25. The Compromise of 1850 and the new Fugitive Slave Act angered many people. The new laws also inspired a Connecticut abolitionist named Harriet Beecher Stowe to write a book called *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In the book, Stowe describes the terrible conditions slaves lived under and how even children were sold as slaves. Slave owners insisted the book was

untrue, but *Uncle Tom's Cabin* quickly became a bestseller in the U.S. and Great Britain and turned many people against slavery. Harriet Beecher Stowe had a house in Hartford which is now a museum.

26. Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois was one of the strongest supporters of the Compromise of 1850. He believed slavery was a state's rights issue and so each state should determine whether to allow slavery. Four years later, Douglas created the Kansas-Nebraska Act. This divided the Louisiana Territory into two territories: Kansas and Nebraska. Like in New Mexico and Utah, the settlers would choose the type of state they wanted. The Kansas Nebraska Act greatly angered abolitionists and split the major political parties. After the Act was passed, the Whig party broke up and abolitionist Democrats left the pro-slavery Democratic Party. Afterwards, many abolitionist politicians joined the new Republican Party, which had been created in response to the Act.
27. By the 1850s, slavery had become the most serious issue in the United States. The compromises were not working and the southern states began talking about leaving the union. In 1858, during the Senate election in Illinois, an unknown Republican named Abraham Lincoln did a series of debates with Stephen Douglas. The main topic was slavery. Lincoln believed slavery was dividing and destroying the nation, while Douglas continued to argue that slavery was about state's rights. Lincoln lost the election, but the debates had received national attention and made Lincoln into a major political figure.
28. The debates made Lincoln so famous that he became the Republican presidential candidate. In 1860 he defeated three other candidates, including Stephen Douglas, to become President of the United States. Because the Republican Party was anti-slavery, southern states began leaving the union even before Lincoln began his presidency. By February 1861 seven states had left and elected their own president, Jefferson Davis. Eventually, 11 southern states would leave and form a new country called the Confederate States of America. On the map, the yellow states are the border states. Border states were slave states that chose to remain in the Union.
29. In April 1861, the Confederate Army attacked the Union Army at Fort Sumter in South Carolina. That began what is now called the Civil War or the War between the States. The Civil War lasted until 1865 when the Confederate Army surrendered. The war ended slavery and saved the union, but also destroyed much of the south and killed more Americans than any other war in history.
30. **Question 73. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.**
31. The U.S. war between the North and the South is called the Civil War or the War between the States.
32. **Question 72. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.**



33. The United States fought several wars in the 1800s. The two mentioned in this lesson are the Mexican-American War and the Civil War. Two other wars are the War of 1812 and the Spanish-American War.
34. Slavery was the main cause of the Civil War, but related to slavery were two other issues: states' rights and economic rights. Many people believed that slavery was a matter of states' rights because the Constitution did not expressly forbid slavery, and the Constitution protected private property. Slavery was also an economic issue because much of the southern economy required slaves. In fact, slaves made up from one-third to one-half of the population in the slave states. As a result, the southern states eventually felt they could no longer stay part of the United States.
35. **Question 74. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.**
36. Slavery, economic reasons, and states' rights are three problems that led to the Civil War.
37. When the Civil War began, Lincoln was not an abolitionist, his main concern was preserving the Union. The first year, the Union Army did very badly and Lincoln needed the full support of the abolitionists to win the war. In September 1862, Lincoln told the Confederate States that he would free all their slaves if they did not return to the Union by January 1, 1863. The Confederacy refused, and on that day, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in the Confederate States, including the slaves in areas the Union Army already controlled. After the Emancipation Proclamation, abolition, along with preservation of the union, became a central goal of the war.
38. The U.S. Constitution can be changed or add to. Such changes or additions are called amendments. After the Civil War, three amendments related to slavery were added.
39. **Question 4. What is an amendment?**
40. An amendment is a change or addition to the Constitution.
41. Lincoln didn't actually have authority to free the slaves. His power came from being a wartime president. Also, the Emancipation Proclamation didn't make slavery illegal, free slaves in the border states, or make freed slaves into citizens. Therefore, Lincoln encouraged Congress to adopt an Amendment outlawing slavery. This became the 13th Amendment and was ratified after the Civil War in December 1865. In 1868, the 14th Amendment gave citizenship to all former slaves, and two years later, the 15th Amendment gave African-American men the right to vote.
42. **Question 76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?**

43. The Emancipation Proclamation

- freed the slaves
- freed slaves in the Confederacy
- freed slaves in the Confederate states
- freed slaves in most Southern states

44. Abraham Lincoln did several important things as President. He successfully led the United States through the Civil War, he saved the union, and he freed the slaves. Lincoln was also the first U.S. president to be assassinated. He was shot by a southerner five days after the Confederate Army surrendered.

45. **Question 75. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?**

46. Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, saved the Union, and led the United States during the Civil War.

## **Lesson 4 - American History: Civil Rights**

### **1. Lesson 4. American History: Civil Rights.**

This lesson explains the history of the civil rights movements in America.

2. The civil rights movement tried to end racial discrimination. Sometimes called the African American Civil Rights Movement, it went through several stages. The movement began before the Civil War and finally ended in the 1960s. The modern phase of the civil rights movement lasted from 1954 until 1968. At the same time, other groups in America were working to gain many of the same rights as African Americans. Together, the different groups successfully used nonviolent protest to end racial segregation and achieve equal voting rights and greater equality for all Americans.

### **3. Question 84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?**

4. The civil rights movement. The civil rights movement tried to end racial discrimination.
5. At the end of the Civil War slavery was outlawed by the 13th Amendment. However, discrimination against African Americans was very common and racial **segregation** was **universal** in the southern states. In those states, blacks and whites had separate seating areas in buses, trains, movie theaters and restaurants. There were also separate water fountains, public bathrooms and schools. In addition, blacks and whites could not marry. African Americans also faced discrimination in employment, housing, and health care.
6. The U.S. Constitution sets up the government, defines the government, and protects the basic rights of Americans. Even so, most southern states had laws protecting segregation and other forms of discrimination. These laws were unconstitutional and meant African Americans and other minorities were denied rights normally guaranteed anyone living in the United States. These included freedom of expression, speech, and assembly, as well as the right to petition the government and to bear arms.

### **7. Question 2. What does the Constitution do?**

8. The Constitution
  - sets up the government
  - defines the government
  - and protects the basic rights of Americans

### **9. Question 51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?**

10. Some rights of everyone living in the United States are:
  - freedom of expression

- freedom of speech
- freedom of assembly
- freedom to petition the government
- freedom of worship
- and the right to bear arms

The first five freedoms come from the 1st Amendment to the Constitution.

11. The Constitution also allows changes or additions to be made to it. Such changes to the Constitution are called amendments. As a result of the civil rights movement, several amendments were added to guarantee some of the basic freedoms of all Americans.

**12. Question 4. What is an amendment?**

13. An amendment is a change or addition to the Constitution.

14. The job of the judicial branch of the U.S. government is to review and explain laws and determine whether a law is constitutional. The highest court in the nation is the Supreme Court. Since African Americans were being denied rights guaranteed by the Constitution, the Supreme Court was often used by African Americans to try to gain their Constitutional rights.

**15. Question 37. What does the judicial branch do?**

16. The judicial branch
- reviews laws
  - explains laws
  - resolves disputes (disagreements)
  - and decides if a law goes against the Constitution

**17. Question 38. What is the highest court in the United States?**

18. The Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States.

19. One problem with using to the Supreme Court was the court did not always support the rights of African Americans. In 1857, the Court ruled in Scott versus Sandford that people of African descent were not U.S. citizens and therefore not protected by the Constitution. After the Civil War this ruling was overturned by the 14th Amendment. The 14th Amendment says that anyone born in the United States is automatically an American citizen. However, the amendment was ignored in many states, particularly southern states. These states then created so-called Jim Crow laws that made segregation and other forms of discrimination legal.

20. These states defended segregation by arguing that the 14th Amendment did not prohibit discrimination by individuals and that segregation created "separate but equal" facilities. In 1883, the Supreme Court agreed that states could not prohibit discrimination by individuals and, three years later, in *Plessy versus Ferguson*, the Court upheld separate but equal. Those decisions made segregation legal and it would be 70 years before it was ended.
21. The United States has always been a democracy, but, originally, only white male land owners could vote. After slavery was outlawed in 1865, the next victory for African Americans came in 1870 when the 15th Amendment allowed men of any race to vote. However, since the Constitution allowed individual states to create their own voting rules, southern states made new laws to keep black men from voting. The most common laws required a voter to pass a reading test or pay a poll tax. This prevented many Americans, both black and white, from voting, and therefore denied them any meaningful political power.
22. Women were another group who could not originally vote. In the 1800s, a few states started to allow women to vote, but activists wanted universal suffrage. One of the most famous activists in the struggle for women's suffrage was Susan B. Anthony. Anthony spent her life fighting for women's rights and civil rights. She protested against slavery, argued for equal rights, and tried for 30 years to help women get the vote. In 1872, she became the first woman in America to vote, although she had to vote illegally. She was arrested and told to pay a \$100 fine. She refused, and two years later the U.S. Congress cancelled the fine. However, that victory did not change the laws. Activists continued to work for female suffrage and in 1920 - 14 years after Susan B. Anthony died - the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote.
- 23. Question 77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?**
24. Susan B. Anthony fought for women's rights and civil rights.
25. Women got voting rights through non-violent methods and civil disobedience. Most African American protesters used the same tactics, in addition to bringing cases to the Supreme Court. In 1951, a group of activists brought a class action suit against the Board of Education in Topeka, Kansas. The case of *Brown versus Board of Education* argued that separate but equal was not true because African American schools were inferior to white schools. In 1954, the Supreme Court unanimously agreed. The court declared "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The Equal Protection Clause requires a state to provide equal protection to everyone. This decision immediately made school segregation illegal throughout the United States.
26. Most schools did not immediately desegregate. For example, Little Rock, Arkansas, allowed

its first nine African American students into a white high school in September 1957. These students became known as the Little Rock Nine and their experience was a serious test for the U.S. government. When the Little Rock Nine tried to go to school, Orval Faubus, the Governor of Arkansas, used the Arkansas National Guard to stop them.

27. By ignoring the Supreme Court, Governor Faubus was going against a basic principle behind the Constitution - the rule of law. The rule of law means everyone must obey the law, even leaders and the government.

**28. Question 12. What is the “rule of law”?**

29. The rule of law means:

- Everyone must follow the law.
- Leaders must obey the law.
- The government must obey the law.
- No one is above the law.

30. The president is the commander-in-chief of the military. So, when Governor Faubus refused to protect the black students, President Eisenhower took over the Arkansas National Guard and replaced them with federal troops. These new soldiers escorted the children into school, but the nine faced constant harassment and discrimination for the whole year. At the end of the school year, Faubus closed all the high schools in Little Rock. The schools remained closed all year, a period now known as The Lost Year.

**31. Question 32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?**

32. The President. The President is Commander in Chief of the military. The military consists of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and National Guard.

33. Eventually, the schools in Little Rock desegregated, although it took several years, and many other cities took much longer. In this picture, U.S. Marshals escort Ruby Bridges to school in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 14, 1960. With Marshals by her side, Bridges became the first black child to enter an all-white elementary school in the American South.

34. An equally important event from this time was the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Like many public transit systems, the buses in Montgomery, Alabama, required black passengers to sit at the back of the bus. On December 1, 1955, a local activist named Rosa Parks was told to give her seat to a white man. She refused, was arrested, and fined \$14. In response, civil rights organizers, including Martin Luther King, started a boycott of the Montgomery bus system. The boycott lasted over a year and while it was happening, a class action suit against the bus company went to the Supreme Court. In this case, *Browder versus Gayle*, the Supreme Court again used the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to declare segregated buses, like segregated schools, unconstitutional.

35. The most important leader in the civil rights movement was Martin Luther King Jr. He was a Baptist minister who fought for civil rights and worked for equality for all Americans. He believed the civil rights movement could only succeed through non-violent means.

**36. Question 85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?**

37. Martin Luther King Jr. fought for civil rights and worked for equality for all Americans. For his work, he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

38. Although Little Rock and Montgomery were great successes, segregation remained legal in most places. Martin Luther King believed he had to show Americans and the world how bad racism still was in the South to get the federal government to act. So, he decided to lead a protest in one of the most segregated cities in the country, Birmingham, Alabama. In Birmingham, segregation was not only legal, it was required. Less than 10% of the black population could vote, professional jobs were reserved for whites, and there were dozens of unsolved murders and bombings against African Americans.

39. The Birmingham campaign lasted nearly a year. It began in 1962 with a series of nonviolent boycotts, demonstrations and protests against local businesses. The idea was to create a situation so difficult that the city would eventually have to negotiate. A few white businesses changed their policies until the city threatened to close any business that did not follow the segregation laws. Organizers then decided they needed to be more confrontational. A series of protests were conducted in the spring of 1963 in which Martin Luther King and many others were arrested. Police dogs were used against the protesters this time, but the violence received little national attention.

40. A controversial decision was then made. It was decided to use school children for the next demonstration. What is now known as the Birmingham Children's March started on May 2, 1963 and lasted until May 7. On the first day, 1,200 students were arrested and by the fourth day, 2,500 protesters were in jail. To try to stop the marchers, the fire department used powerful water hoses and the police used attack dogs. Pictures of students being knocked down by fire hoses and bitten by dogs shocked many Americans and caused international embarrassment. While not everyone agreed with the use of children to protest, the actions of the Birmingham city government forced Washington to start talking about desegregation and the protection of everyone's civil rights.

41. On May 8th, white business owners agreed to most of the demands of the protesters, but desegregation was slow and for months there was violence and resistance. Several buildings were bombed including a church, the hotel Martin Luther King stayed in, and the house of King's brother. In addition, the Governor of Alabama sent troops to prevent black students from going to white schools.

42. After Birmingham, Martin Luther King planned a march on Washington D.C. to demand civil rights and equal rights in education, employment and businesses. On August 28, 1963, 250,000 people participated in The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. This march became one of the most iconic events of the civil rights movement.
43. At this demonstration Martin Luther King gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech in which he imagined a world free of racial discrimination, a world in which everyone would be "free at last."
44. Early the next year, the 24th Amendment was passed. This Amendment outlawed poll taxes. Later that year, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was also passed. The act outlawed all segregation and other forms of discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin. President Lyndon Johnson signed the bill on July 2, 1964.
45. **Question 48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.**
46. One amendment about who can vote grants voting rights to any citizen who is eighteen or older. Another amendment outlaws poll taxes. A third one allows any citizen to vote, and the last amendment allows a male citizen of any race to vote.
47. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was not the end of the civil rights movement because it did not address all the problems with voting rights. Protests and other activities such as voter registration drives continued throughout the south. Attempts to register black voters in Selma, Alabama, where less than 1% could vote, led to attacks on organizers and protesters. After one protester was shot and killed, a march from Selma to Montgomery was organized. The first march took place on March 7, 1965 and became known as "Bloody Sunday" when 600 marchers were attacked by police with clubs and tear gas. During the second march two days later, 2,500 protesters were prevented from crossing a bridge by police. The third march started March 16, but this time the marchers were protected by 4,000 soldiers and federal agents. The violent reaction to the Selma marchers caused President Johnson to insist Congress write a strong voting rights bill.
48. Congress acted quickly and created the Voting Rights Act prohibiting any "practice ... to deny... the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color." President Johnson signed bill into law on August 6, 1965. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks attended the signing ceremony.
49. The Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act were followed by the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Also called the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the Fair Housing Act, the act outlawed discrimination in the sale, rental, or financing of housing. In 1988, the law was updated to include people with disabilities and families with children.



50. The civil rights movement ended official discrimination and made it more difficult for individual forms of discrimination. However, the ultimate goal of the civil rights movement has always been guaranteed equal rights for all Americans. In that respect, the movement continues today. Some current issues include equal pay for women, gay rights, immigrant rights, and health care as a civil right.

51. In 2008, the United States elected Barack Obama as President. Obama is America's first ever black president. This was seen by many as a sign that racism has become less of a problem in the United States.

52. **Question 28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?**

53. Barack Obama. The President of the United States now is Barack Obama.

## **Lesson 5 - American History: International Wars**

### **1. Lesson 5. American History: International Wars.**

This lesson explains the more important international wars fought by the United States in the 1800s and 1900s.

2. The United States fought several international wars in the 1800s. The wars were fought to expand U.S. territory and regional influence, establish international borders, and defend national sovereignty. The first international war was the War of 1812. The War of 1812 was the first time America declared war on another nation. The War was fought against Great Britain in the United States and in Canada. In 1803, Britain and France went to war. America declared its **neutrality** and continued to trade with both countries. However, Britain did not want us trading with their enemy, so blockaded American ports. In addition, the British often boarded U.S. ships and forced American sailors into the British Navy.
3. Another cause of the War of 1812 was American expansionism. The United States quickly began expanding west after the Revolutionary War and, after the Louisiana Purchase, settlers quickly moved into the territory between the United States and Louisiana. However, this caused conflict with Native Americans. North of the territory was Canada, which was still a British colony, and to try to protect Canada, Britain encouraged Native American tribes to attack American settlers.
4. **Question 71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?**
5. Louisiana. The United States bought Louisiana, or the Louisiana Territory, from France in 1803.
6. The capital of the United States is Washington, D.C. In 1790, Congress approved the creation of the national capital along the Potomac River between Delaware and Virginia. The area was set up as a federal district, not a state. The new area was called the District of Columbia because, at the time, Columbia was a poetic name for the United States. In 1791, the city itself was named in honor of George Washington, the first president of the United States. Congress held its first session in the new capital in November 1800.
7. **Question 94. What is the capital of the United States?**
8. Washington, D.C. Washington, D.C. is the capital of the United States. D.C. stands for District of Columbia.
9. On June 18, 1812, the U.S. declared war on Great Britain. The War of 1812 lasted until 1815. During the war Britain attacked several U.S. cities, including the new capital, Washington, D.C., and the United States invaded Canada. However, the war was very expensive, neither country could win a big victory and the small U.S. Navy surprised Britain by fighting well.

Also, when peace negotiations began, Napoleon had been defeated and the British blockade had ended. Therefore, with most of the original issues settled, it was fairly easy to agree on a peace treaty. After the war, the U.S.-Canadian border went back to the way it was in 1812. British support for the Native Americans also ended, which allowed for easier westward expansion.

10. The War of 1812 is famous in American history because during it the British attacked Washington D.C. and burned down the White House and Capital. It is also famous for inspiring the U.S. national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The song came from a poem written the morning after the British bombed an American fort. A soldier there, Francis Scott Key, was inspired to write when he saw the U.S. flag was still flying over the fort. The song has three verses, but usually only the first verse is sung. "The Star-Spangled Banner" was made the official national anthem in 1931.
11. **Question 98. What is the name of the national anthem?**
12. "The Star-Spangled Banner." The name of the national anthem is "The Star-Spangled Banner."
13. The next international war of the 1800s was the Mexican-American War. The Mexican American War was the result of America's expansion west. What is now the state of Texas was originally Mexican territory. The territory had a small population and was often attacked by Native Americans. To try to protect their country, Mexico invited immigrants to settle in Texas. So many Americans came, that within 10 years they were 80% of the population. Mexico then tried to end the immigration, and a few years later, in 1835, Texas declared its independence. A Mexican army attacked, was defeated, and Mexico agreed to make Texas an independent republic. In 1845, Texas asked to join the United States. The U.S. annexed Texas, Mexico attacked again, and after a series of battles was defeated.
14. The peace treaty forced Mexico to give up Texas and the rest of their northern territories. This is the pink area on the map. The U.S. now stretched across the continent from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west.
15. **Question 89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?**
16. The Pacific. The Pacific Ocean is the largest ocean on Earth.
17. **Question 90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?**
18. The Atlantic. The Atlantic Ocean is the most traveled ocean in the world.
19. The last war of the 1800s was the Spanish-American War. Cuba had been a Spanish territory since the time of Columbus. In 1895, a war for independence began. To try to maintain

control, the Spanish forced many Cubans into camps in which as many as 200,000 people may have died. This caused great concern and anger in the U.S. and in 1898 the U.S. sent the battleship *Maine* to protect Americans living in Cuba. A month later a large explosion sank the *Maine*. While most likely an accident, the Spanish were blamed, and the United States declared *war*. The Spanish-American War was fought on Cuba and in the Pacific Ocean around the Philippines and Guam. The Spanish were quickly defeated, and as part of the peace treaty, the U.S. won control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.

**20. Question 72. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.**

21. The United States fought several wars in the 1800s. Four of them are

- the War of 1812
- the Mexican-American War
- the Civil War
- and the Spanish-American War.

The Civil War is not in this lesson because it was not an international war.

22. There were two world wars in the first half of the 1900s. The U.S. eventually entered both wars on the side of Britain, France and Russia. World War I, was fought in Europe from 1914 to 1918. The causes of the World War I are complicated but include militarism, imperialism, nationalism, and military alliances. The major European countries had been fighting each other for centuries. In the early 1900s, relations were so bad that a minor, local event pushed Europe into one of the deadliest wars in history.

23. The event that began World War I was the assassination of a member of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Ferdinand was killed by a nationalist Serb who wanted his country freed from the Austro-Hungarian empire. Tensions in Europe quickly grew after the assassination and no diplomacy was able to calm the situation. Within six weeks, Europe was at war. The war began when Austria attacked Serbia. Germany then attacked Belgium, France, and Russia. Great Britain entered the war too because it had promised to defend Belgium.

24. In October 1917, while Russia was fighting Germany, there was a revolution in Russia. Communists overthrew the Russian monarchy and ended their war with Germany. Communism is an economic and political system in which the government owns all property and industry and decides what will be produced. In that way, it is the opposite of capitalism. Communist governments are also totalitarian, which means citizens have few rights or freedoms. In 1922, Russia's new communist government changed the country's name to the Soviet Union.

25. Woodrow Wilson was president before and during World War I. Like before the War of 1812, at the beginning of World War I, the U.S. attempted to be neutral and continued to

trade with Britain. Great Britain is an island nation so most of its food comes by ship. So Germany used submarines to stop trade with Britain and, in February 1915, declared it would sink any ship it found near Britain. A couple of months later, a German submarine sank the British passenger ship *Lusitania* and 128 Americans died. The U.S. protested, but shortly after Germany began sinking American ships as well. Germany knew this would force the United States to declare war, so they sent a telegram encouraging Mexico to attack the U.S. Mexico refused, but President Woodrow Wilson could no longer ignore Germany's actions and Congress declared war on April 6, 1917.

**26. Question 79. Who was President during World War I?**

27. Wilson. Woodrow Wilson was president during World War I.

28. With the U.S. now fighting along with France and Britain, Germany realized it could not win the war and surrendered on November 11, 1918. The peace treaty required Germany to give up territory and pay a tremendous amount of war damages. This hurt the German economy and caused great anger in Germany. For these reasons, the treaty is now seen as one of the main causes of World War II.

29. The economic system of the United States is based on free market capitalism. In capitalism, businesses are privately-owned and operated for profit. In a market economy, what is produced and how much is charged is determined through free competition and the interaction of supply and demand.

**30. Question 11. What is the economic system in the United States?**

31. Capitalist. The economic system in the United States is capitalist with a market economy.

32. In 1929, the U.S. stock market crashed and America went into economic depression. This period is called the Great Depression. The President in 1929, Herbert Hoover, was blamed for the Great Depression and lost reelection in 1932 to Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt would become the longest serving U.S. president and lead the U.S. through the Great Depression and World War II. He died at the beginning of his fourth presidential term in 1945.

**33. Question 80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?**

34. Roosevelt. Franklin Roosevelt was president during the Great Depression and World War II.

35. In Germany, economic problems, a weak government, and unhappiness over the treaty that ended World War I, helped a politician named Adolf Hitler become leader in 1934. Hitler quickly became a dictator and turned Germany into a totalitarian country like the Soviet Union. Hitler was also the leader of the Nazi party, a political party with a very nationalistic

and racist ideology. Nazis believed Germans were the purest race and therefore deserved to conquer all of Europe and the Soviet Union.

36. World War II was a true world war and the most destructive war in history. It was fought throughout Europe and Asia. The war began in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. Great Britain and France then declared war on Germany. The next year, Germany defeated France and Britain was now alone. The U.S. assisted Britain, but was not in direct conflict with Germany. Instead, as a global power with a large navy, the U.S. was in competition with Japan. Japan wanted to create an empire in Asia, but the U.S., Britain, France and Holland all had colonies there. However, by 1941, only the U.S. could resist Japan, so Japan decided to attack the United States. On December 7, 1941, Japan bombed the American fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. America declared war on Japan, and shortly after, Germany declared war on the U.S.
37. During the war, the British and American needed a supreme commander. Because the U.S. was contributing the most men and material, it was decided an American should be commander. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was chosen because he was diplomatic and understood the political challenges of wartime leadership. After the war, Eisenhower retired and was later elected President.
38. **Question 82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?**
39. World War II. President Eisenhower was a general in World War II before he was president.
40. In World War II, the United States, Britain, Russia and France fought against Germany, Japan and Italy. Battles took place in Europe, Russia, North Africa, and throughout much of Asia and the Pacific. Italy was defeated in 1943, but Germany and Japan didn't surrender until 1945.
41. **Question 81. Who did the United States fight in World War II?**
42. Japan, Germany, and Italy. The United States fought Japan, Germany, and Italy in World War II.
43. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, the U.S. and the Soviet Union became **ideological** rivals because their economic systems were so different. During World War II, the two countries became allies, but when the war ended, the Soviet Union set up communist governments in the countries they freed from the Germans. This concerned the U.S. and marked the beginning of the Cold War, the time when communism was the main concern of the United States. However, the Cold War was not a real war. The U.S. and Soviet Union never fought each other. Instead, they competed for global influence. On the map, the countries in red are the communist nations. The other countries are the western democracies. In 1949, China also became communist.

44. **Question 83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?**

45. Communism. The main concern of the United States during the Cold War was Communism.
46. While the United States and the Soviet Union never fought each other during the Cold War, the U.S. fought two major wars to try to stop other countries from becoming communist. The Korean War was the first such war. Before World War II, Korea was a colony of Japan. When the war ended, Korea was divided along the 38th parallel into a communist north, **allied** with China and Russia, and a southern half, allied with the United States. Elections were planned for the whole country, after which Korea would be reunified. However, the North Korean government refused to allow elections because they knew they would lose. Therefore, the country remained divided and in June 1950 North Korea invaded South Korea. The United States and 20 other countries from the **United Nations** sent troops to South Korea. When the U.N. army pushed the North Korean army to the Chinese border, China attacked the U.N. army. By June 1951 the two sides were in a **stalemate** around the 38th parallel. The war continued for another two years while peace talks slowly progressed and in July 1953 an **armistice** was finally signed. However, the armistice only ended the fighting; it did not end the war. Therefore, North and South Korea are still technically at war and the country remains divided at the 38th parallel.
47. The greatest conflict to come out of the Cold War was the Vietnam War. Vietnam was a French colony for 70 years. Shortly after the Second World War, communist fighters in the north of the country began fighting the French. The Korean War had ended in a stalemate, so when the Vietnamese communists defeated the French in 1954, the American government was very concerned. President Eisenhower spoke about a "Domino Theory" in which one country would become communist, then another, and another, until communism controlled the world.
48. As part of the peace agreement with the French, Vietnam was divided at the 17th parallel into a communist north and U.S.-backed south. As with Korea, elections were planned, after which the country would be reunified. However, this time, the U.S. and South Vietnam refused to hold elections because they worried they would lose. Vietnam remained divided and a communist insurgency soon began in the south.
49. The United States began sending military advisors to South Vietnam in 1955. In 1965, the first American combat troops arrived. By the end of that year, there were 200,000 American soldiers in Vietnam. By 1968, there were over 500,000. The United States fought in Vietnam until 1973 with little success. American troops were removed that year and two years later South Vietnam was defeated by communist North Vietnam.
50. The Cold War ended in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. By the 1980s, the Soviet economy was very weak and the country was losing control over the its communist allies in

Europe. The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, tried to save the communist system by giving citizens some economic and political freedom, and allowing freedom of speech. The result was a series of mostly peaceful revolutions that overthrew the communist governments of the Soviet Union and all of its allies. The symbol of their collapse occurred in November, 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down.

51. Because of oil, both during and after the Cold War, the U.S. was also concerned about the Middle East. The U.S. fought its first war in the Middle East in 1990 after Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait. Iraq said it did this for two reasons. First, after World War I Britain created the nation of Kuwait from the remains of the Ottoman Empire. However, Iraq argued that Kuwait had always been part of their country. Second, Iraq and Kuwait belonged to the group of oil producing countries called OPEC. OPEC sets oil production quotas to maintain the price of oil and Iraq accused Kuwait of producing too much oil and drilling across the border into Iraq's oil fields. When Iraq demanded \$10 billion in damages from Kuwait, Kuwait offered \$9 billion. Iraq would not accept this and announced it would invade.
52. On August 2, 1990, Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. The U.S. was concerned Iraq would invade Saudi Arabia afterwards. That would have seriously threatened the world's oil supply. The United Nations condemned Iraq and the United States formed a coalition of nations willing to support an attack on the country. On December 17, 1990, the United Nations ordered Iraq leave Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Iraq refused, and two days later a U.S.-led bombing campaign against Iraq began. A month later, on February 23, the coalition army invaded and liberated Kuwait in one hundred hours.
53. **Question 78. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.**
54. The United States fought several wars in the 1900s. Five of them are
  - World War I
  - World War II
  - Korean War
  - Vietnam War
  - and the Persian Gulf War
55. At the end of the Gulf War, the United States kept some troops in Saudi Arabia and the United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq. The sanctions were intended to prevent the country from rebuilding its army or making weapons of mass destruction. Some Muslims in the Middle East did not like the idea of American troops staying there. For many years, there had also been many complaints about America's support for Israel. Together, these two policies made the United States an enemy in the eyes of many ordinary Muslims and terrorist groups.
56. In February 1993, a truck bomb exploded under the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Six people were killed and 1000 injured. The terrorists responsible said



they wanted the United States out of the Middle East and all support for Israel stopped. A few years later, Osama bin Laden, the leader of a terrorist group called al-Qaeda, called on Muslims to join a holy war against America. bin Laden said he was opposed to U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, America's support of Israel, and the U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

57. Al-Qaeda then decided to attempt a very big attack on the U.S. Planning took several years and on September 11, 2001, 19 terrorists from al-Qaeda hijacked four commercial airliners. Their plan was to fly the airplanes into the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and another building in Washington, D.C. Three planes hit their targets, the fourth one crashed in Pennsylvania when passengers attacked the hijackers. This attack led to the American invasion of Afghanistan, and later, the invasion of Iraq.

**58. Question 86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?**

59. Terrorists attacked the United States. On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the U.S.

## **Lesson 6 - American Government: Rights and Responsibilities**

### **1. Lesson 6. American Government: Rights and Responsibilities.**

This lesson is about your rights and responsibilities as an American citizen. Understanding your rights and civic responsibilities will allow you to better participate in American society and its political process.

2. The Constitution includes procedures allowing changes or additions to be made to it. These are called amendments. So far, 27 amendments have been added to the Constitution. Four of the amendments are about voting.

### **3. Question 4. What is an amendment?**

4. An amendment is a change or addition to the Constitution.

### **5. Question 7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?**

6. 27. The Constitution has 27 amendments.

7. The United States has always been a democracy, but, originally, only white male land owners could vote. The Constitution also allowed states to decide their own voting rules. Today, any citizen who is 18 years old or older may vote. Equal voting rights for all citizens were achieved only after years of struggle and four amendments to the Constitution. The first amendment gives the vote to all males, regardless of their race. Another amendment outlaws poll taxes. The third amendment gives women the right to vote, and the last allows any citizen who is 18 or older to vote.

### **8. Question 54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?**

9. 18. Citizens have to be 18 or older to vote for President, or in any other federal, state or local election.

### **10. Question 48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.**

11. There are four amendments to the Constitution about voters' rights. One amendment grants voting rights to any citizen who is eighteen or older. Another outlaws poll taxes. A third amendment allows both men and women to vote, and the last one allows a male citizen of any race to vote.

12. Five of these rights come from the 1st Amendment. These five rights are freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to petition the government, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press. However, the right to bear arms is not part of the 1st Amendment,

that right comes from the 2nd Amendment.

**13. Question 51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?**

14. Some rights everyone living in the United States has are

- freedom of expression
- freedom of speech
- freedom of assembly
- freedom to petition the government
- freedom of worship
- and the right to bear arms

15. Everyone living in the United States, not just citizens, has certain basic rights. They are freedom of expression and speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to petition the government, freedom of worship, and freedom of the press. Freedom of expression and speech means a person may say or otherwise express any idea they wish. Freedom of assembly is the freedom to gather in a group. Freedom to petition the government means any citizen can make a complaint to the government. Freedom of worship allows someone to practice or not practice a religion. Freedom of the press allows newspapers to print whatever they want, including criticism of the government and its leaders. A final freedom of anyone living in the United States is the right to bear arms. This means a person may own a gun.

**16. Question 6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?**

17. The First Amendment guarantees five freedoms or rights - freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and freedom to petition the government.

18. As a citizen, you must serve on a jury and vote in federal elections. The Constitution allows citizens the right to a trial by jury. A jury is a group of citizens who listen to a court case to decide if a person is guilty or innocent. If you receive a letter for jury duty, you are required to serve because jury duty is a legal responsibility. Voting, on the other hand, is a civic responsibility. It is important that all citizens participate in the democratic process and help choose leaders that represent their ideas and interests.

**19. Question 49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?**

20. Two responsibilities of a U.S. citizen are serving on a jury and voting in a federal election.

21. Other responsibilities of a U.S. citizen include obeying the law, paying taxes, and knowing about current issues. However, even if you aren't a citizen, you must still obey all laws and

pay taxes. Anyone who works in the United States has to pay federal income tax, and usually state income tax as well. During your naturalization exam you will be asked if you owe any taxes, so it is important to pay your taxes on time. Every year, April 15 is the last day you can send in your federal and state income tax forms.

**22. Question 56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?**

23. April 15. April 15 is the last day you can send in your federal income tax forms.

24. While you don't have to be a citizen to have some of the same rights as Americans, citizenship gives you two very important rights – the right to vote in federal elections and to run for federal office.

**25. Question 50. Name one right only for United States citizens.**

26. Two rights that are only for U.S. citizens are voting in a federal election and running for federal office.

27. When you become naturalized, you will be required to say the Pledge of Allegiance. When you say the Pledge of Allegiance you show your loyalty to the United States and to its flag. The words to the Pledge of Allegiance are:

*I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

The original pledge was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy, but was not written for the United States. Bellamy wrote a pledge to be used by citizens of any country. In the 1920s, the phrase "the flag of the United States of America" was added. Then, in 1954, Congress added the words "under God." That last change created the pledge we say today. When saying the pledge, you should stand facing the flag with your right hand over your heart. If you are wearing a military uniform, you should salute instead of putting your hand over your heart.

**28. Question 52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?**

29. To the United States and to the country's flag. When we say the Pledge of Allegiance, we show our loyalty to the United States and to the country's flag.

30. As a U.S. citizen, you also have responsibilities to serve the country should you be asked to.

31. The Pledge of Allegiance means you give up loyalty to other countries. When you become a citizen you also promise to defend the Constitution and laws of the United States, obey the laws of the United States, serve in the U.S. military if needed, serve or do important work

for the nation if needed, and be loyal to the United States.

**32. Question 53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?**

33. There are several promises you make when you become a U.S. citizen. Some of them are:

- give up loyalty to other countries
- defend the Constitution and laws of the United States
- obey the laws of the United States
- serve in the U.S. military if necessary
- serve or do important work for the nation if needed
- and be loyal to the United States

34. There are many ways a citizen can become involved in their democracy. This participation is so important that many of the activities are protected by the Constitution. Some ways Americans can participate in their democracy include:

- vote
- help with a campaign
- join a community group
- call Senators and Representatives
- run for office
- join a political party
- join a civic group
- give an elected official your opinion on an issue
- publicly support or oppose an issue or policy
- write to a newspaper

**35. Question 55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?**

36. There are many ways Americans can participate in their democracy including voting, joining various types of groups, helping with a campaign, publicly sharing opinions, and running for office. Even if you are not a citizen, you can still do any of these activities except vote or run for office.

37. You do not have to be a member of a political party to vote. Nor do you have to vote for your party if you are a member. One advantage to belonging to a political party is you can vote in primary elections. Connecticut has closed primaries, which requires you to belong to the political party to vote. However, other states have open primaries, which allows any voter to vote in a primary, whether they belong to a political party or not.

38. For most of its history, the United States has been dominated by two political parties, although the parties and policies have differed over time. Third parties are usually more successful in local elections, but very important in bringing new ideas into national politics. Women's voting rights, child labor laws, the 40-hour work week, and Social Security are all ideas originally promoted by third parties. Currently, the largest third parties in the U.S. are the Libertarian Party, Green Party, and Constitution Party. The Libertarian Party believes in very limited federal government. The most radical form would be a government that only

provides police, prisons, courts, and a military. The Green Party promotes grass roots democracy, social justice, non-violence, and environmentalism. The Constitution Party wants greater power given to the states and a federal government guided by a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

39. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. The elephant is the symbol of the Republican Party and the donkey represents the Democratic Party. Since the 1850s, all U.S. presidents and all but one Connecticut governor have belonged to one of these two parties.

40. **Question 45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?**

41. The Democratic and Republican parties. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic and Republican parties. **The elephant is the symbol of the Republican Party and the donkey represents the Democratic Party.**

42. When citizens are ordered to join a nation's armed forces, that is called a draft. The United States used a draft in the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Today, the United States military is all volunteer. Men and women can choose to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, but are not required to. However, men between the ages of 18 and 26 must still register for military service. This system is called Selective Service and will be used should a new draft become necessary.

43. **Question 57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?**

44. Between the ages of 18 and 26. All men must register for Selective Service at the age of 18 or between 18 and 26.

## **Lesson 7 - American Government: The Legislative Branch**

### **1. Lesson 7. American Government: The Legislative Branch.**

This lesson explains the structure and function of the first branch of American government, the legislative branch.

2. The Constitution sets up a government with three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative branch is also called Congress and consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The executive branch is the president, vice president and cabinet. The judicial branch refers to the courts. The highest court in the nation is the Supreme Court.

### **3. Question 2. What does the Constitution do?**

4. The Constitution

- sets up the government
- defines the government
- and protects the basic rights of Americans

### **5. Question 13. Name one branch or part of the government.**

6. The three parts of the government are:

- Congress, which is also called the legislative
- the President, also known as the executive
- and the courts, or the judicial branch

7. The Founding Fathers did not want any part of the government to become too powerful. So, they created a government with three branches and gave each branch separate and clearly defined powers. This is called separation of powers. The Constitution also includes a system of checks and balances which allows one part of government to "check" another. For example, Congress can reject a treaty signed by the president, the president can reject bills from Congress, and the Supreme Court can declare a law to be unconstitutional. The combination of a separation of powers and a system of checks and balances works to limit the power of government and to protect individual rights.

### **8. Question 14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?**

9. The separation of powers and system of checks and balances keep one branch of government from becoming too powerful.

10. The Constitution gives the legislative branch a wide range of powers. The powers include making federal laws, levying taxes, maintaining the nation's armed forces, declaring war,

and creating roads, federal courts and post offices. However, to protect states' rights and individual rights, the Constitution says that any powers not expressly given to the federal government are reserved for the states.

11. Another name for the legislative branch is Congress. Congress consists of two houses, sometimes called the lower house and upper house. The House of Representatives is the lower house. The Senate is the upper house. Like the three branches of government, the two houses of Congress have different powers and the ability to check one another. For example, only the House of Representatives can propose new taxes, and only the Senate can approve Presidential appointments such as cabinet officials, federal judges, and ambassadors. Also, the House of Representatives can impeach members of the government, even the President and Vice President, but the Senate decides whether or not to remove the person from office.

**12. Question 17. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?**

13. The Senate and House of Representatives. The Senate and House of Representatives are the two parts of the U.S. Congress.

14. The House of Representatives has 435 voting members plus 6 non-voting members representing the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Representatives are distributed among the states according to population; states with more people get more Representatives. For example, Connecticut has five Representatives while Alaska, the largest state in the country, has only one because it has a much smaller population. The distribution of the 435 Representatives is adjusted every ten years after a national census. So Representatives can better reflect the opinions of the people, each one is responsible for a specific district and serves only a two-year term. There are no term limits, and anyone over the age of 25 who has been a citizen for seven years may be a Representative.

**15. Question 25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?**

16. Some states have more Representatives
- because of the state's population
  - because they have more people
  - because some states have more people

**17. Question 21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?**

18. 435. The House of Representatives has 435 voting members.

**19. Question 22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?**



20. Two. A U.S. Representative is elected for two years. This short term makes Representatives more accountable and responsive to the people.

21. Before the 2000 census, Connecticut had six Representatives. Now, the state has five. They represent districts one through five. Your Representative and district depends upon the town you live in. For example, if you live in Hartford you are in district one and your Representative is John Larson. If you live in New Britain, you are in district five and your Representative is Elizabeth Esty.

**22. Question 23. Name your U.S. Representative.**

23. Answers to this question will vary. Who your U.S. Representative is depends upon the town you live in. Use the map above to find your district, or, find your district by looking up your town in the lists on the next two pages.

24. This page lists the towns in districts 1 and 2. Most towns have only one district. However, Glastonbury, Durham, Middletown, Waterbury, and Torrington have two districts. If you live in one of these towns, check your town map to determine which district you live in.

25. This page lists the towns in districts 3, 4, and 5.

26. There are 100 U.S. senators. Unlike the House of Representatives, each state has equal Representation in the Senate because each state has two senators. Also, senators do not serve a district, but all the people of their state. The Founding Fathers gave senators six-year terms because they want the Senate to be less influenced by public opinion. Every two years, along with the House elections, approximately 33 senate seats have elections. Like a Representative, a senator has no term limit, although to become a senator one must be over 30 years old and have been a citizen for nine years.

27. Connecticut's newest senator is Christopher Murphy. He was elected in 2012. The other senator is Richard Blumenthal. He was elected in 2010. Both are Democrats.

**28. Question 18. How many U.S. Senators are there?**

29. One hundred. Each of the 50 states has two senators, making for a total of 100 senators.

**30. Question 19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?**

31. Six. We elect senators for six years.

**32. Question 20. Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators now?**

33. Richard Blumenthal and Christopher Murphy are Connecticut's two senators.

**34. Question 24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?**

35. A senator represents all the people of the state. They do not serve a particular district like Representatives do.

36. The U.S. Congress is the only branch of the government that makes federal laws. Both parts of Congress share this power. When the legislature proposes a new law, it must go through a system of checks and balances in Congress and with the executive branch. Every year more than 5000 bills are introduced, but only about 150 become law.

37. A new law starts as an idea. Since the First Amendment gives people the right to petition the government, the idea can come from almost any person, group or organization - a citizen, the president, a lobbyist, even a state legislature. If the idea is accepted by a U.S. Representative, the proposed law is introduced to both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Such a proposal is called a bill. Both houses of Congress then make their own version of the bill. Once each house has accepted its own version, Congress works together to make a final version. This final bill is sent to the President to either sign into law or veto. A veto means the President has rejected the bill. If a bill is vetoed, the President must explain why and send the bill back to Congress. Congress can then change the bill and send it back to the President or try to vote the bill into law with a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress.

**38. Question 16. Who makes federal laws?**

39. Congress makes federal laws.

- The Senate and House of Representatives make federal laws.
- The U.S. legislature makes federal laws.

**40. Question 33. Who signs bills to become laws?**

41. The President. The President must sign a bill for it to become law.

**42. Question 34. Who vetoes bills?**

43. The President. Only the President can veto bills.

44. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic party and the Republican party. The elephant is the symbol of the Republican Party and the donkey represents the Democratic Party. While less common, a politician may also be an independent, which means he or she doesn't belong to a political party. Currently, there are two independent senators and several independent Representatives in Congress. Both of Connecticut's senators and all five Representatives are Democrats.

45. **Question 45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?**

46. The Democratic and Republican parties. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic and Republican parties.

47. For most of its history, the United States has had two major political parties, although the parties and policies have differed over time. Third parties are usually more successful in local elections, but very important in bringing new ideas into national politics. Women's voting rights, child labor laws, the 40-hour work week, and Social Security are all ideas originally promoted by third parties. Currently, the largest third parties in the U.S. are the Libertarian Party, Green Party, and Constitution Party. The Libertarian Party believes in very limited federal government. The most radical form would be a government that only provides police, prisons, courts, and a military. The Green Party promotes grass roots democracy, social justice, non-violence, and environmentalism. The Constitution Party wants greater power given to the states and a federal government guided by a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

48. The political party that has the most members in the House of Representatives chooses the Speaker of the House. The Speaker is a very powerful position. The Speaker decides what bills will be considered, assigns Representatives to committees, and controls the floor debates. In addition, if both the President and Vice President can no longer serve, the Speaker of the House becomes President.

49. **Question 31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?**

50. The Speaker of the House of Representatives. If both the President and Vice President can no longer serve, the Speaker of the House becomes President.

51. Since Representatives serve only two years, in the middle of each presidential term there are midterm elections. When President Barack Obama was elected in 2008, the Democrats also won a majority in the House of Representatives. Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat from California, was chosen as the Speaker of the House. In the 2010 midterm elections, the Republican Party won back control of the House and chose John Boehner, a Republican from Ohio, as Speaker. Boehner remained Speaker after the 2012 elections and resigned in 2015. Republican Paul Ryan was then made Speaker.

52. **Question 47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?**

53. Ryan. Paul D. Ryan is the Speaker of the House of Representatives now.

## Lesson 8 - American Government: The Executive Branch

### 1. **Lesson 8. American Government: The Executive Branch.**

This lesson explains the structure and function of the second branch of American government, the executive branch.

2. The Constitution sets up a government with three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative branch is also called Congress and consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The executive branch is the president, vice president and cabinet. The judicial branch refers to the courts. The highest court in the nation is the Supreme Court.

### 3. **Question 2. What does the Constitution do?**

4. The Constitution

- sets up the government
- defines the government
- and protects the basic rights of Americans

### 5. **Question 13. Name one branch or part of the government.**

6. The three parts of the government are:

- Congress, which is also called the legislative
- the President, also known as the executive
- and the courts, or the judicial branch

7. The Founding Fathers did not want any part of the government to become too powerful. So, they created a government with three branches and gave each branch separate and clearly defined powers. This is called separation of powers. The Constitution also includes a system of checks and balances which allows one part of government to "check" another. For example, Congress can reject a treaty signed by the president, the president can reject bills from Congress, and the Supreme Court can declare a law to be unconstitutional. The combination of a separation of powers and a system of checks and balances works to limit the power of government and to protect individual rights.

### 8. **Question 14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?**

9. The separation of powers and system of checks and balances keep one branch of government from becoming too powerful.

10. The executive branch is comprised of the President and the cabinet. The Constitution says the executive's job is to carry out and enforce the nation's laws, and "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution."
11. The President is both the head of state and head of the government. As head of state, the President is the symbolic face of both the nation and the government as well as its top diplomat. As head of the government, the President is in charge of the executive branch and therefore sets national policy, proposes legislation to Congress, and nominates Supreme Court justices and federal judges. The president is also Commander in Chief of the military.
12. The current president is Barack Obama. He was first elected in 2008 and reelected in 2012.
13. **Question 15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?**
14. The President. The President is in charge of the executive branch.
15. **Question 28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?**
16. Obama. Barack Obama is the President of the United States now.
17. **Question 32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?**
18. The President. The President is Commander in Chief of the military. The military consists of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and National Guard.
19. Congress is the only branch of government that can make laws. When Congress is working on a new law, the proposal is called a bill. When they are done, the final bill is sent to the President to either sign into law or to veto. A veto means the President has rejected the bill. If a bill is vetoed, the President must explain why and send the bill back to Congress. Congress can then change the bill and send it back to the President or try to vote the bill into law with a two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress.
20. **Question 33. Who signs bills to become laws?**
21. The President. The President must sign a bill for it to become law.
22. **Question 34. Who vetoes bills?**
23. The President. Only the President can veto legislative bills.
24. The job of the Presidents' cabinet is to advise the president. The cabinet consists of the Vice President and the heads of the 15 executive departments. Departments are specialized parts of the executive branch responsible for specific public services. For example, the U.S.

Treasury prints money and collects taxes, the Department of Defense is responsible for national security and the military, and the Department of Homeland Security responds to natural and man-made disasters and works to prevent terrorist attacks. Most department heads are called secretaries. In another example of checks and balances, the President nominates the cabinet members, but the Senate must accept the candidate.

**25. Question 35. What does the President's Cabinet do?**

26. Advise the President. The job of the President's Cabinet is to advise the President.

**27. Question 36. What are two Cabinet-level positions?**

28. There are currently 16 Cabinet-level positions. Two are Attorney General and Vice President. The other 14 positions are secretaries of different executive departments, such as the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary of State.

29. As a member of the cabinet, the Vice President helps advise the president, but performs other duties as well. For instance, the Vice President performs ceremonial duties when the President is busy, casts tie-breaking votes in the Senate, and most importantly, becomes President should the President be no longer able to serve. The current Vice President is Joseph Biden.

**30. Question 29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?**

31. Biden. The current Vice President of the United States is Joe Biden.

**32. Question 30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?**

33. The Vice President. If the President can no longer serve, the Vice President becomes President.

34. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic party and the Republican party. The elephant is the symbol of the Republican Party and the donkey represents the Democratic Party. Since 1853, all presidents have belonged to one of these two parties. President Barack Obama is a Democrat. The previous president, George Bush Jr., is a Republican.

**35. Question 45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?**

36. The Democratic and Republican parties. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic and Republican parties.

**37. Question 46. What is the political party of the President now?**

38. The Democratic Party. The current President belongs to the Democratic Party.
39. For most of its history, the United States has had two major political parties, although the parties and policies have differed over time. Third parties are usually more successful in local elections, but very important in bringing new ideas into national politics. Women's voting rights, child labor laws, the 40-hour work week, and Social Security are all ideas originally promoted by third parties. Currently, the largest third parties in the U.S. are the Libertarian Party, Green Party, and Constitution Party. The Libertarian Party believes in very limited federal government. The most radical form would be a government that only provides police, prisons, courts, and a military. The Green Party promotes grass roots democracy, social justice, non-violence, and environmentalism. The Constitution Party wants greater power given to the states and a federal government guided by a strict interpretation of the Constitution.
40. Presidential elections are held every four years in November. All citizens over the age of 18 can vote for president. Although he could have served longer, the first president, George Washington, set a precedent by serving only two terms. Franklin Roosevelt is the only president to have served more than two terms. He died in 1945 at the beginning of his fourth term. In 1951, the 22nd Amendment was passed and now presidents are limited to two terms.
41. **Question 26. We elect a President for how many years?**
42. Four. A president is elected for four years and may serve only two terms.
43. **Question 27. In what month do we vote for President?**
44. November. We vote for President in November. Election day is always the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.
45. **Question 54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?**
46. Eighteen. Citizens have to be eighteen or older to vote for President, or in any other federal, state or local election.
47. **Question 70. Who was the first President?**
48. Washington. The first president of the United States was George Washington.
49. Presidential elections have two stages. Primary elections are the first stage. Primary elections are held when two or more candidates from the same party compete for the same

position. Usually, when a sitting president runs for a second term, no member of the President's party competes with the President. However, when a president's second term is ending, there are two main sets of primary elections, one for Democrats and another for Republicans. For instance, in the 2008 Presidential election, there were nine Republican candidates and eight Democratic candidates. Barack Obama won the Democratic primary and John McCain won the Republican primary. They then ran against each other - and an independent candidate and three third party candidates - in the Presidential election.

50. Presidential primaries are long and complicated. From January to June, candidates campaign from state to state as each state votes for its preferred nominee. As the campaigning and voting progresses, some candidates quit. Sometimes there is only one candidate remaining before the last primary in June. The final candidate from each party is then selected at a national convention and the final candidate from each party competes in the Presidential election in November. Connecticut, like most states, has closed primaries. That means you must be a member of the political party to vote in their primary election. Around 20 states have open Presidential primaries which allow any registered voter to vote. In that way, they are just like state and national elections. You do not have to be a member of a political party to vote in the primary.
51. U.S. presidential elections are indirect elections. This means the candidate with the greatest number of votes is not always the winner. Instead, a body called the electoral college determines who becomes president. In the electoral college, each state has a number of electors equal to its total number of U.S. Representatives and Senators. For example, Connecticut has five Representatives and two Senators, so has seven electors. During a presidential election, the candidate who receives the most votes in Connecticut gets all seven votes. At the end of the national election the candidate with the most electoral votes becomes President. The electoral college was developed to protect against "tyranny of the majority" and to give smaller states more influence. In *The Federalist Papers*, James Madison describes the electoral college as another aspect of federalism. He argues that the House of Representatives is population-based and the Senate state-based. In the same way, the general election is population-based and the electoral college is state-based. So far, the electoral college has elected the candidate with fewer popular votes three times, in 1876, 1888 and 2000.
52. The Constitution sets up rules in case the President, for whatever reason, can no longer serve. When that happens, the Vice President becomes President. If both the President and Vice President cannot perform their duties, the Speaker of the House of Representatives becomes President. So far, eight U.S. Presidents have died while in office and one has resigned.
53. The current Speaker of the House is Paul Ryan, a Republican from Wisconsin. He became Speaker of the House in 2015 when John Boehner resigned. Boehner had been Speaker since 2010.



54. **Question 31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?**

55. The Speaker of the House of Representatives. If both the President and Vice President can no longer serve, the Speaker of the House becomes President. This has never happened in U.S. history.

56. **Question 47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives?**

57. Ryan. Paul D. Ryan is the Speaker of the House of Representatives now.

## Lesson 9 - American Government: The Judicial Branch

### 1. **Lesson 9. American Government: The Judicial Branch.**

This lesson explains the structure and function of the third branch of American government, the judicial branch.

2. The Constitution sets up a government with three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative branch is also called Congress and consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The executive branch is the president, vice president and cabinet. The judicial branch refers to the courts. The highest court in the nation is the Supreme Court.

### 3. **Question 2. What does the Constitution do?**

4. The Constitution

- sets up the government
- defines the government
- and protects the basic rights of Americans

### 5. **Question 13. Name one branch or part of the government.**

6. The courts. The courts are one branch of the government. The three parts of the government are:

- Congress, which is also called the legislative
- the President, also known as the executive
- and the courts, or the judicial branch

7. The Founding Fathers did not want any part of the government to become too powerful. So, they created a government with three branches and gave each branch separate and clearly defined powers. This is called separation of powers. The Constitution also includes a system of checks and balances which allows one part of government to "check" another. For example, Congress can reject a treaty signed by the president, the president can reject bills from Congress, and the Supreme Court can declare a law to be unconstitutional. The combination of a separation of powers and a system of checks and balances works to limit the power of government and to protect individual rights.

### 8. **Question 14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?**

9. The separation of powers and system of checks and balances keep one branch of government from becoming too powerful.

10. The job of the judicial branch is to review and explain laws, resolve disagreements, and decide whether a law goes against the Constitution.
11. The Constitution set up the judicial branch by creating the Supreme Court. Later, Congress established related lower federal courts so now the federal court system has three levels. At the bottom are 94 district courts. Every state and territory has at least one district court. Above them are 11 courts of appeal that serve a specific area of the country. At the top is the U.S. Supreme Court. This is the highest court in the nation and it alone resolves disputes between states and determines whether a law goes against the Constitution. As such, the Supreme Court is the "court of last resort."
12. This is a picture of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington D.C.
13. **Question 37. What does the judicial branch do?**
14. The judicial branch
- reviews laws
  - explains laws
  - resolves disputes (disagreements)
  - and decides if a law goes against the Constitution
15. **Question 38. What is the highest court in the United States?**
16. The Supreme Court. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States.
17. There is a total of nine justices on the Supreme Court - one Chief Justice and eight associate justices. With nine judges there is always a definite decision when the court votes. Justices are appointed by the President, approved by Congress, and serve for life. The Chief Justice is the head of the federal judiciary and head of the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice sets the Supreme Court's agenda and leads the court when it is in session. The Chief Justice also administers the oath of office to all new Presidents and oversees the trial in the Senate if a President is impeached. The current Chief Justice is John Roberts Jr.
18. **Question 39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?**
19. Nine. There are nine justices on the Supreme Court.
20. **Question 40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?**
21. John Roberts Jr. John Roberts Jr. is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court now.
22. A basic principle behind the U.S. Constitution is the rule of law. The rule of law means everyone must obey the law, even leaders and the government. With the Supreme Court at

the top, all the courts in the United States help preserve the rule of law and the idea that no one is above the law.

**23. Question 12. What is the “rule of law”?**

24. The rule of law means:

- Everyone must follow the law.
- Leaders must obey the law.
- The government must obey the law.
- No one is above the law.

25. Using the Constitution as its guide, the Supreme Court has played an important role in the evolution of American democracy and civil rights. Some of its most important decisions have helped define the powers of the three branches of government, end segregation, and protect the basic freedoms of Americans. As the highest court in the land, Supreme Court decisions are final and apply to everyone in the United States. Because of its authority, the court's decisions can be very controversial.

26. One controversial ruling is *Texas versus Johnson*. Gregory Johnson was arrested for burning a U.S. flag during the 1984 Republican Convention. At that time, 48 states had laws protecting the American flag. Johnson was sentenced to a year in prison and fined \$2,000. He appealed his conviction and in 1989 the Supreme Court voted 5-4 that the burning of an American flag is a form of free speech.

27. A more recent ruling is from the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* case of 2010. At that time, corporations and unions could not make direct contributions to political parties or federal candidates. There were also restrictions on when these organizations could pay for political advertisements. In the *Citizens United* case, the Supreme Court ruled that these restrictions were a violation of free speech. This is a controversial decision because many people believe corporate spending is harmful to the democratic system. For example, in 2012, the presidential and congressional candidates spent \$6 billion on their campaigns and most of the money came from corporations and unions.

## Lesson 10 - American Government: State and Local Government

### 58. **Lesson 10. American Government: State and Local Government.**

This lesson explains the structure and function of state and local government in the United States.

59. The U.S. Constitution sets up a federal system of government. This type of government has a central government at the top and state governments below. This creates a broader government, encourages experimentation and keeps the government close to the people. Federal and state governments share some powers such as establishing courts, making laws and collecting taxes. Other powers though belong to only one government or the other. Under the Constitution, some powers granted to the federal government are the ability to print money, create an army, declare war, and make treaties with other countries.

### 60. **Question 41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?**

61. Some powers that belong to the federal government are the powers to

- print money
- declare war
- create an army
- and make treaties

62. While the Constitution gives the federal government certain powers, to protect states' rights and individual rights, the **10th Amendment** says that any powers not given to the federal government belong to the states. Some state powers include providing schooling, education, protection and safety. Protection is police departments, and safety means fire departments. States also give driver's licenses, and approve zoning and land use. Zoning and land use determines how land is used. This includes whether buildings can be built, what types of buildings can be built, and how they are used.

### 63. **Question 42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?**

64. Under our Constitution, some of the powers that belong to states are to provide schooling and education, provide protection, provide safety, give a driver's license, and approve zoning and land use.

65. The United States has three levels of government - federal, state and local. The federal government is the government in Washington D.C. It deals with foreign governments and national issues, creates all federal laws, and upholds the Constitution. In this way, what the federal government does affects all 50 states.

66. Below the federal government are the 50 separate state governments. State governments have many of the same powers and responsibilities as the federal government. However, the power of a state government is limited to a given state. Then below each state government are many local governments. Currently there are 87,525 local governments throughout the United States.
67. The U.S. Constitution sets up the federal government and protects the basic rights of all Americans. Every state also has their own constitution that does similar things. While there are many differences between state constitutions and governments, every state government has the same three branches as the federal government: a legislative, executive, and judicial. In every state except Nebraska, the legislative branch consists of a House of Representatives and Senate. In contrast, Nebraska only has one house of Congress.
68. The Connecticut legislature is also called the General Assembly, and its job is to make state laws. Connecticut's General Assembly has 36 Senators and 151 Representatives. Each one represents a district that contains an equal number of citizens. In addition, all Connecticut Senators and Representatives serve 2-year terms and have no term limits.

**69. Question 2. What does the Constitution do?**

70. The Constitution

- sets up the government
- defines the government
- and protects the basic rights of Americans

**71. Question 13. Name one branch or part of the government.**

72. The courts. The courts are one branch of the government. The three parts of the government are:

- Congress, which is also called the legislative
- the President, also known as the executive
- and the courts, or the judicial branch

73. The job of a state executive is to carry out and enforce the state's laws. The leader of the executive branch and head of the state government is the governor. Connecticut's executive branch consists of the governor and five other elected executive officers.

74. As head of the executive, a governor sets state policy, proposes legislation to the General Assembly, and commands the state's National Guard. Like a President, governors sign bills into law and have veto power. In Connecticut, the governor also has a line-item veto which allows the governor to reject parts of a bill without vetoing it all. In 48 states, including

Connecticut, governors serve four-year terms. In Vermont and New Hampshire, they serve two-year terms. Connecticut is also one of 14 states that have no term limit for governors.

75. In addition to the governor, the executive branch in Connecticut includes a Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of State, Comptroller /con-trol-ler/, and Attorney General. The Lieutenant Governor is like the Vice President. He or she is president of the senate, and becomes Governor should the Governor be no longer able to serve. The Treasurer is like a banker and manages all the money the state receives. The Comptroller /con-trol-ler/ is like an accountant and writes financial reports and manages the state's budget. The Secretary of State is responsible for state elections and all public records. The Attorney General is the state's chief legal advisor and chief law enforcement officer. Like the President and Vice President, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor are elected together. However, in Connecticut, members of the executive are not appointed, but elected separately. All members of the executive serve four-year terms, like the governor.
76. The judicial branch is the state court system. State courts are independent from federal courts, although the two systems sometimes interact. Like the federal court system, each state court system has a highest court. In every state except New York and Maryland, this is the State Supreme Court. If serious enough, a case may move from the state's highest court to the U.S. Supreme Court. Below the top court are a series of lower courts. Appellate Courts are courts of Appeal and Superior Courts hear the most serious and trial cases. In addition to Superior Courts, there are several special courts that deal with minor cases and more specific areas such as juvenile crime, family matters, and traffic violations.
77. Connecticut's highest court is the Connecticut Supreme Court. The court has seven justices, including one Chief Justice. Justices are appointed by the governor and approved by the General Assembly. There is no term limit, but Justices must retire when they turn 70.
78. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic party and the Republican party. The elephant is the symbol of the Republican Party and the donkey represents the Democratic Party. Since 1857, only one Connecticut governor has not been either a Democrat or Republican.
79. For most of its history, the United States has had two major political parties, although the parties and policies have differed over time. Third parties are usually more successful in local elections, but very important in bringing new ideas into national politics. Women's voting rights, child labor laws, the 40-hour work week, and Social Security are all ideas originally promoted by third parties. Currently, the largest third parties in the U.S. are the Libertarian Party, Green Party, and Constitution Party. The Libertarian Party believes in very limited federal government. The most radical form would be a government that only provides police, prisons, courts, and a military. The Green Party promotes grass roots democracy, social justice, non-violence, and environmentalism. The Constitution Party

wants greater power given to the states and a federal government guided by a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

**80. Question 45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?**

81. The Democratic and Republican parties. The two major political parties in the United States are the Democratic and Republican parties.

82. In 2010, Dannel Malloy was elected Connecticut's new governor. He is Connecticut's first Democratic governor in 20 years. Before he was governor, Malloy was the mayor of Stamford. The Lieutenant Governor is Nancy Wyman. She is also a Democrat and was Comptroller for 16 years before becoming Lieutenant Governor.

**83. Question 43. Who is the Governor of your state now?**

84. Dannel Malloy. The Governor of Connecticut is Dannel Malloy.

85. Hartford is the capital of Connecticut now, but Connecticut originally had two capitals, Hartford and New Haven. Every two years, the government moved from one city to the other. As Connecticut and its government grew, however, this arrangement became too inefficient. In 1873, a referendum was held to choose which city would become the state's only capital. Hartford won and, in 1879, the current state capital building was completed.

**86. Question 44. What is the capital of your state?**

87. Hartford. The capital of Connecticut is Hartford. This is a picture of Main Street outside of the library.

88. Under each state government are numerous local governments. The structure and function of local government varies depending upon the state. However, local governments have many of the same powers as federal and state government such as the power to make laws and to collect taxes. More importantly, they also provide services like police and fire departments, trash collection, street lighting, road maintenance, and voter registration.

89. Connecticut, like other states in New England, does not have county governments. Instead, local government is based on cities, towns, and boroughs. Cities and towns are equal under state law, while a borough is part of a town and therefore not fully independent. In Connecticut, cities are governed by a mayor and city council. Towns are run by either a mayor, first selectman, or town manager plus some form of council. In the majority of Connecticut towns, legislative work is conducted through a town meeting. This is a form of direct democracy which allows citizens to directly express their views and vote on proposals. Most town governments have 4-year terms.



90. The Mayor of Hartford is Pedro Segarra. He is a Democrat and was elected in 2010.

**Connecticut has 169 towns and 20 cities. 19 of the cities are coextensive with their towns, with the city and town governments also consolidated.**

The **Connecticut House of Representatives** is the lower house in the Connecticut General Assembly, the state legislature of the US state of Connecticut. The house is composed of 151 members representing an equal number of districts, with each constituency containing nearly 22,600 residents. Representatives are elected to two-year terms with no term limits. The House convenes within the Connecticut State Capitol in Hartford.

The **Connecticut State Senate** is the upper house of the Connecticut General Assembly, the state legislature of the US state of Connecticut. The state senate comprises 36 members, each representing a district with around 94,600 inhabitants. Senators are elected to two-year terms without term limits. The Connecticut State Senate is one of 14 state legislative upper houses whose members serve two-year terms; four-year terms are more common.

## **Lesson 11 - Integrated Civics: Geography, Symbols and Holidays**

### **1. Lesson 11: Integrated Civics - Geography, Symbols and Holidays.**

This lesson explains some American geography and many of the more important symbols and holidays in the United States.

2. The United States offers a great variety of landscapes. This includes the Pacific coast and Rocky Mountains in the west, and the deserts of the southwest. In the center of the country are the Great Plains and the Missouri and Mississippi River systems. Along the Canadian border are the Great Lakes and in the east are the Appalachian Mountains and Atlantic coast. In addition are the tropical islands of Hawaii and snowy mountains and wilderness of Alaska.
3. Much of the territory that is now the United States was purchased from other countries. One of the largest purchases was made in 1803 when President Thomas Jefferson bought Louisiana from France for \$15 million. The Louisiana Territory doubled the size of the United States, allowed for easier trade along the Mississippi river, and encouraged westward expansion.
4. **Question 71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?**
5. Louisiana. The United States bought Louisiana, or the Louisiana Territory, from France in 1803.
6. The two longest rivers in the United States are the Missouri River and the Mississippi River. They are part of the same river system and together form the fourth longest river in the world. Both rivers have been used for trade, transportation, irrigation and food since before Europeans came to America.
7. The Missouri River is the longest river in the United States. The Missouri meets the Mississippi River north of Saint Louis, Missouri. The Missouri became part of the United States with the Louisiana Purchase. Because the source of the river is far west of Saint Louis, the Missouri became a main route for westward expansion.
8. The Mississippi River is the second longest river in the U.S. It begins near the Canadian border and ends at the Gulf of Mexico. Mississippi comes from a Native American word that means "great river." The Mississippi was the western border of the United States from 1783 until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.
9. Mark Twain is sometimes called "the father of American literature." He grew up near the Mississippi River and was a steamboat captain before he became a writer. He later moved to Hartford, Connecticut, where he wrote his most famous books: *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. All three books take

place at least partly on the Mississippi River. Mark Twain's house in Hartford is now a museum.

**10. Question 88. Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.**

11. The two longest rivers in the United States are the Missouri River and the Mississippi River.

12. The two largest oceans in the world are the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. The United States is located between these two oceans. On the east coast is the Atlantic Ocean and on the west coast is the Pacific. The Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest ocean in the world. The Atlantic is the most traveled.

**13. Question 89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?**

14. The Pacific. The Pacific Ocean is on the west coast of the United States.

**15. Question 90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?**

16. The Atlantic. The Atlantic Ocean is on the east coast of the United States.

17. The United States has 50 states and five major territories: Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. Territories are U.S. possessions and do not have full representation in Congress. Instead, each territory has one non-voting member in the House of Representatives. Residents of all U.S. territories, except American Samoa, are U.S. citizens so can vote or run for office if they become a resident of an American state. In contrast, American Samoa is self-governing, so Samoans can only vote or serve in their local government. However, Samoans may freely work and travel in the U.S. like a U.S. citizen or resident.

**18. Question 91. Name one U.S. territory.**

19. The five major U.S. territories are Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands and Guam.

20. The border between Canada and the United States is the longest border in the world between the same two countries. It is also sometimes called the longest undefended border in the world. Thirteen American states border Canada. From east to west, the states are Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Alaska.

**21. Question 92. Name one state that borders Canada.**

22. The 13 states that border Canada are Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Alaska.

23. The U.S.-Mexico border is one of the busiest borders in the world. Four states border Mexico. From east to west, they are Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. All four states were originally part of Mexico.

**24. Question 93. Name one state that borders Mexico.**

25. California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. The four states that border Mexico are Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

26. The capital of the United States is Washington, D.C. In 1790, Congress approved the creation of a national capital along the Potomac River between Maryland and Virginia. The area was set up as a federal district, not a state. The new area was called the District of Columbia because, at the time, Columbia was a poetic name for the United States. In 1791, the city itself was named in honor of George Washington, the father of our country and the first president of the United States. Congress held its first session in the new capital in November 1800. Much of Washington D.C. was later destroyed by the British during the War of 1812.

**27. Question 94. What is the capital of the United States?**

28. Washington, D.C. is the capital of the United States. D.C. stands for District of Columbia.

29. The Statue of Liberty in New York is probably the most famous symbol of the United States. The statue was a gift from France is a symbol of freedom and democracy and of the friendship created between the two countries during the Revolutionary War. The statue shows the Roman goddess of liberty with a broken chain at her feet. She is also holding a torch of enlightenment and a tablet with the date of the Declaration of Independence written on it. Because the statue is on Liberty Island in New York Harbor, after it was opened in 1886, it became the first thing many European immigrants saw upon arriving in America.

**30. Question 95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?**

31. The Statue of Liberty is in New York. In New York Harbor

- on Liberty Island
- in New Jersey
- near New York City
- and on the Hudson River are also acceptable answers.

32. The United States has had many flags, even more than one flag at the same time. Most of the designs include a star for each state so the flags had to be changed as more states joined the union. The official U.S. flag now has 13 stripes representing the original 13 colonies and 50 stars for the 50 states. The 50th star was added in 1959 when Hawaii joined the union.

**33. Question 96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?**

34. The American flag has 13 stripes

- because there were 13 original colonies.
- because the stripes represents the original colonies.

**35. Question 97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?**

36. The American flag has 50 stars

- because there is one star for each state
- because each star represents a state
- because there are 50 states

37. The U.S. national anthem is "The Star-spangled Banner." The song came from a poem written during the War of 1812. The morning after the British bombed an American fort, Francis Scott Key was inspired to see the U.S. flag still flying over the fort. The song has three verses, but traditionally only the first verse is sung. "The Star-spangled Banner" was made the official national anthem in 1931.

**38. Question 98. What is the name of the national anthem?**

39. "The Star-Spangled Banner." The name of the national anthem is "The Star-Spangled Banner."

40. There are 10 national holidays in the United States. However, they are only official holidays for the federal government. Each state decides whether to recognize a holiday or not. Originally, each holiday had a fixed date. Then, in 1968, Congress moved five holidays from their original date to a Monday so workers could have a long weekend. The other five holidays - New Year's Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas - are still observed on their original day. All 10 national holidays are observed in Connecticut.

41. The first holiday of the year is New Year's Day. The holiday is January 1st and marks the beginning of the new year. Although the holiday is January 1st, the celebration actually takes place the night before on December 31st. That day is called New Year's Eve. On New Year's Eve people count down to midnight, the official beginning of the new year. The first day of the year, New Year's Day, also marks the end of the Christmas and holiday season.

42. Martin Luther King Jr. Day is the third Monday in January. It celebrates the birthday of the most important civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr. He fought for civil rights and worked for equality for all Americans. This is the most recent national holiday and was first observed nationally in 2000.

**43. Question 85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?**

44. Martin Luther King Jr. fought for civil rights and worked for equality for all Americans. For his work, he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

45. Presidents' Day is also called Washington's Birthday. The holiday was originally created in 1879 to honor the first U.S. President and Father of our Country, George Washington. In 1968, Congress moved Washington's Birthday to the third Monday in February. That meant the holiday was never on his actual birthday. Also, since President Abraham Lincoln's birthday is in February, this holiday is now called Presidents' Day and used to honor all U.S. presidents.

**46. Question 69. Who is the "Father of Our Country"?**

47. George Washington. George Washington is "the Father of Our Country."

**48. Question 70. Who was the first President?**

49. Washington. The first president of the United States was George Washington.

50. Like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln is one of the most important Presidents because he also did many important things. For example, Lincoln led the United States during the Civil War, saved the union, and freed the slaves.

**51. Question 75. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?**

52. Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, saved the Union, and led the United States during the Civil War. Lincoln was also the first U.S. president to be assassinated. He was shot by a southerner five days after the Confederate Army surrendered.

53. Memorial Day is the last Monday in May. On that day, citizens honor those who have died fighting for America. To commemorate the dead, many towns have a parade. The day also marks the beginning of the summer vacation season.

54. Independence Day is July 4. On the Fourth of July Americans celebrate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Firework displays are held in many cities throughout the country and people often have picnics or barbecues.

**55. Question 99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?**

56. July 4. Independence Day is celebrated on July 4.

57. The first Monday in September is Labor Day. Labor Day became a national holiday in 1894 to celebrate the contributions of workers and the labor movement. As with Memorial Day, parades, picnics, and barbecues are common. Labor Day also marks the end of the summer vacation season.

58. Columbus Day is the second Monday in October and honors Christopher Columbus as the European discoverer of the Americas. Columbus Day was made a national holiday in 1937.

59. Veterans Day is November 11. Veterans Day honors everyone who has served in the armed forces of the United States. November 11th was chosen because the First World War ended on that day. Like on Memorial Day, many towns have a parade to honor the military on this holiday.

60. Thanksgiving is the fourth Thursday in November. Traditionally, the holiday was used to give thanks for the autumn harvest, but now is a day in which people give thanks for what they have. A traditional Thanksgiving dinner includes a turkey and pumpkin pie. Thanksgiving is often viewed as the start of the Christmas and holiday season.

61. Christmas is December 25. It is the most widely celebrated holiday in the United States and the most important holiday for many Christians. On Christmas, most Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. However, whether someone is Christian or not, on Christmas, friends and family exchange gifts and have a special dinner like on Thanksgiving. Some of the many elements related to Christmas are Christmas trees, Christmas lights, Christmas music, nativity scenes, wreaths and figures of Santa Claus, a mythical character who brings toys to children.

**62. Question 100. Name two national U.S. holidays.**

63. The ten national U.S. holidays are New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.