

IOWA
End-of-Course
Assessment
Programs
Released Items

1 What can a president do if he or she disapproves of one part of a bill passed by Congress?

A Require Congress to redraft the bill

INCORRECT: If a president disapproves of one part of a bill passed by Congress, he or she cannot require the Congress to redraft the bill. This would be a violation of the principle of separation of powers.

B Veto the entire bill

CORRECT: If a president disapproves of one part of a bill passed by Congress, the only thing the president can do is veto the entire bill.

C Veto a section of the bill and sign the rest

INCORRECT: If a president disapproves of one part of a bill passed by Congress, he or she cannot veto a section of the bill and sign the rest. The “line item” veto power was held by President Clinton from 1996 until 1998 for appropriations bills and was found to violate the separation of powers principle.

D Require the Supreme Court to review the bill

INCORRECT: If a president disapproves of one part of a bill passed by Congress, he or she cannot require the Supreme Court to review a bill. This would be a violation of the principle of separation of powers.

ICC Essential Concept:

Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution.

ICC Essential Skill:

Identify basic principles and responsibilities associated with each branch of government.

2 Which power do both national and state governments possess?

A Establishing local governments

INCORRECT: The national government cannot establish local governments. Only states can establish local governments.

B Conducting elections

INCORRECT: Although both federal and state laws regulate elections, states have the sole responsibility under the U.S. Constitution to conduct elections.

C Conducting foreign affairs

INCORRECT: Only the national government has jurisdiction in conducting foreign affairs.

D Establishing laws

CORRECT: Both the national and state governments share the power to establish laws.

ICC Essential Concept:

Understand the differences among the complex levels of local, state and national government and their inherent, expressed, and implied powers.

ICC Essential Skill:

Distinguish between implied and expressed powers. Understand jurisdiction among the local, state, and national levels of government.

3 Which of the following is an example of a president's shared power?

A Making a treaty

CORRECT: The Treaty Clause of the U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2, Clause 2, empowers the president to make treaties with other countries with consent of the Senate. The need to obtain consent to perform the office of the president means that making treaties is a shared power.

B Granting a pardon

INCORRECT: The president does not share the power to grant pardons with any other branch of government.

C Issuing an executive order

INCORRECT: The president does not share the power to issue executive orders with any other branch of government.

D Ordering troops to protect U.S. citizens abroad

INCORRECT: This is an example of the president's power as commander in chief. The president does not share this power with any other branch of government.

ICC Essential Concept:

Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution.

ICC Essential Skill:

Identify basic principles and responsibilities associated with each branch of government.

4 How is the number of electors in the Electoral College determined for a state?

- A** By determining that state's percentage of the national population

INCORRECT: The number of representatives for each state is determined by population. However, the number of electors for each state is not determined by a percentage of the population of the state.

- B** By determining that state's percentage of the national voting population

INCORRECT: The number of electors for each state is not determined by a percentage of the national voting population.

- C** By adding together the number of state legislators and federal judges from that state

INCORRECT: The number of electors for each state is not determined by adding the number of state legislators and federal judges in the state.

- D** By adding together the number of U.S. representatives and U.S. senators from that state

CORRECT: Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 states that "each State shall appoint...a number of electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress..." Therefore, the number of electors for each state is determined by adding the number of representatives and senators of the state.

ICC Essential Concept:

Understand the Constitution as the embodiment of the values and principles of democracy and republicanism.

ICC Essential Skill:

Know the role the U.S. Constitution plays in governance of the United States.

5 Why is a filibuster an effective way to block legislation?

- A** It enables a minority in the Senate to defeat a majority.

CORRECT: A filibuster is an effective way to block legislation because “it enables a minority in the Senate to defeat a majority.” This is due to the fact that in order to stop a filibuster, a vote for cloture must be taken and cloture requires a supermajority.

- B** It enables committees to prevent bills from reaching the floor for a vote.

INCORRECT: A filibuster has nothing to do with the power of committees to decide which bills they send to the floor.

- C** It enables a president to force the Senate to consider his or her opinion.

INCORRECT: The filibuster does not give additional power to the president.

- D** It enables a majority in the Senate to delay a vote.

INCORRECT: A majority in the Senate would not use a filibuster to block legislation or delay a vote.

ICC Essential Concept:

Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution.

ICC Essential Skill:

Identify basic principles and responsibilities associated with each branch of government.

6 Which example best demonstrates checks and balances at work?

- A** The president fires a member of the cabinet who does not follow his or her directions.

INCORRECT: The president has the authority to fire members of the cabinet as these positions are within the executive branch. They serve at the president's discretion and can be replaced at any time.

- B** A constitutional amendment requires states to recognize the right of 18-year-olds to vote.

INCORRECT: A constitutional amendment that requires states to recognize the right of 18-year-olds to vote is not an example of checks and balances; rather, it is an aspect of federalism.

- C** The United States Supreme Court declares a state law unconstitutional.

INCORRECT: The United States Supreme Court, as the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution, has the power to declare a state law unconstitutional. However, exercise of this power is an example of federalism not checks and balances.

- D** The president vetoes a bill passed by Congress.

CORRECT: In order for a bill to become law, the president must sign it. And since the legislative branch is primarily concerned with making laws, the president's veto power is the best example of checks and balances.

ICC Essential Concept:

Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution.

ICC Essential Skill:

Explore contemporary and historical examples of how the branches have checked each other.