

Questions and Answers for New Pilot Naturalization Exam

On November 30, 2006, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Emilio Gonzalez announced the release of 144 questions and answers for the pilot test of a new naturalization exam. USCIS will administer the pilot exam to about 5,000 volunteer citizenship applicants in 10 cities beginning in early 2007.

USCIS included new questions that focus on the concepts of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In designing the new exam, USCIS received assistance and worked with test development contractors, U.S. history and government scholars, and English as a Second Language experts. USCIS also sought input from a variety of stakeholders, including immigrant advocacy groups, citizenship instructors and District Adjudications Officers.

The pilot will allow USCIS to work out any problems and refine the exam before it is fully implemented nationwide in the spring of 2008.

During the trial period, volunteer applicants who choose to take the pilot exam can immediately take the current exam if they incorrectly answer a pilot question. To pass, applicants will have to correctly answer six of 10 selected questions. The 10 pilot test sites are: Albany, NY; Boston, MA; Charleston, SC; Denver, CO; El Paso, TX; Kansas City, MO; Miami, FL; San Antonio, TX; Tucson, AZ; and Yakima, WA.

Pilot Exam Questions and Answers

1. Name one important idea found in the Declaration of Independence.

A: People are born with natural rights.

A: The power of government comes from the people.

A: The people can change their government if it hurts their natural rights.

A: All people are created equal.

2. What is the supreme law of the land?

A: The Constitution

3. What does the Constitution do?

A: It sets up the government.

A: It protects basic rights of Americans.

4. What does “We the People” mean in the Constitution?

A: The power of government comes from the people.

5. What do we call changes to the Constitution?

A: Amendments

6. What is an amendment?

A: It is a change to the Constitution.

7. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?

A: The Bill of Rights

8. Name one right or freedom from the First Amendment.

A: Speech

A: Religion

A: Assembly

A: Press

A: Petition the government

9. How many amendments does the Constitution have?

A: Twenty-seven (27)

10. What did the Declaration of Independence do?

A: Announce the independence of the United States from Great Britain

A: Say that the U.S. is free from Great Britain

11. What does freedom of religion mean?

A: You can practice any religion you want, or not practice at all.

12. What type of economic system does the U.S. have?

A: Capitalist economy

A: Free market

A: Market economy

13. What are the three branches or parts of the government?

A: Executive, legislative, and judicial

A: Congress, the President, the courts

14. Name one branch or part of the government.

A: Congress

A: Legislative

A: President

A: Executive

A: The courts

A: Judicial

15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?

A: The President

16. Who makes federal laws?

A: Congress

A: The Senate and House (of Representatives)

A: The (U.S. or national) legislature

17. What are the two parts of the United States Congress?

A: The Senate and House (of Representatives)

18. How many United States Senators are there?

A: 100

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

A: Six (6)

20. Name your state's two U.S. Senators.

A: Answers will vary. [For District of Columbia residents and residents of U.S. territories, the answer is that DC (or the territory where the applicant lives) has no U.S. Senators.]

21. How many U.S. Senators does each state have?

A: Two (2)

22. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?

A: 435

23. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?

A: Two (2)

24. Name your U.S. Representative.

A: Answers will vary. [Residents of territories with nonvoting delegates or resident commissioners may provide the name of that representative or commissioner. Also acceptable is any statement that the territory has no (voting) representatives in Congress.]

25. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?

A: All citizens in that Senator's state

26. Who does a U.S. Representative represent?

A: All citizens in that Representative's district (each state is divided into districts)

27. What decides each state's number of U.S. Representatives?

A: The state's population

28. How is each state's number of Representatives decided?

A: The state's population

29. Why do we have three branches of government?

A: So no branch is too powerful

30. Name one example of checks and balances.

A: The President vetoes a bill.

A: Congress can confirm or not confirm a President's nomination.

A: Congress approves the President's budget.

A: The Supreme Court strikes down a law.

31. We elect a President for how many years?

A: Four (4) years

32. How old must a President be?

A: Thirty-five (35) or older

A: At least thirty-five (35)

A: More than thirty-five (35)

33. The President must be born in what country?

A: The United States

A: America

34. Who is the President now?

A: [Current president] (as of November 20, 2006, George W. Bush)

35. What is the name of the President of the United States?

A: [Current president] (as of November 20, 2006, George W. Bush)

A: (President) George W. Bush

A: George Bush

A: Bush

36. Who is the Vice President now?

A: [Current vice president] (as of November 20, 2006- Richard (Dick) Cheney)

A: Dick Cheney

A: Cheney

37. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States?

A: [Current vice president] (as of November 20, 2006- Richard (Dick) Cheney)

A: Dick Cheney

A: Cheney

38. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

A: The Vice President

39. Who becomes President if both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve?

A: The Speaker of the House

40. Who is the Commander-in-Chief of the military?

A: The President

41. How many full terms can a President serve?

A: Two (2)

42. Who signs bills to become laws?

A: The President

43. Who vetoes bills?

A: The President

44. What is a veto?

A: The President refuses to sign a bill passed by Congress.

A: The President says no to a bill.

A: The President rejects a bill.

45. What does the President's Cabinet do?

A: Advises the President

46. Name two Cabinet-level positions.

A: Secretary of Agriculture

A: Secretary of Commerce

A: Secretary of Defense

A: Secretary of Education

A: Secretary of Energy

A: Secretary of Health and Human Services

A: Secretary of Homeland Security

A: Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

A: Secretary of Interior

A: Secretary of State

A: Secretary of Transportation

A: Secretary of Treasury

A: Secretary of Veterans' Affairs

A: Attorney General

47. What Cabinet-level agency advises the President on foreign policy?

A: The State Department

48. What does the judicial branch do?

A: Reviews and explains laws

A: Resolves disputes between parties

A: Decides if a law goes against the Constitution

49. Who confirms Supreme Court justices?

A: The Senate

50. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States?

A: John Roberts (John G. Roberts, Jr.)

51. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?

A: Nine (9)

52. Who nominates justices to the Supreme Court?

A: The President

53. Name one thing only the federal government can do.

A: Print money

A: Declare war

A: Create an army

A: Make treaties

54. What is one thing only a state government can do?

A: Provide schooling and education

A: Provide protection (police)

A: Provide safety (fire departments)

A: Give a driver's license

A: Approve zoning and land use

55. What does it mean that the U.S. Constitution is a constitution of limited powers?

A: The federal government has only the powers that the Constitution states that it has.

A: The states have all powers that the federal government does not.

56. Who is the Governor of your state?

A: Answers will vary.

[District of Columbia and U.S. Territory residents would answer that they do not have a state governor or that they do not live in a state. Mentioning the governor of the territory for Guam is acceptable. Any answer that mentions one of these facts is acceptable.]

57. What is the capital (or capital city) of your state?

A: Answers will vary. [District of Columbia residents would answer that DC is not a state, and that therefore it does not have a capital. Any answer that mentions one of these facts is acceptable.]

58. What are the two major political parties in the U.S. today?

A: Democrats and Republicans

59. What is the highest court in the U.S.?

A: The Supreme Court

60. What is the majority political party in the House of Representatives now?

A: Democrats

A: Democratic Party

61. What is the political party of the majority in the Senate now?

A: Democrats

A: Democratic Party

62. What is the political party of the President now?

A: Republicans

A: Republican Party

63. Who is the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

A: Nancy Pelosi

64. Who is the Senate Majority Leader now?

A: Harry Reid

65. In what month are elections held in the United States?

A: November

66. What is the current minimum wage in the U.S.?

A: \$5.15

67. When must all males register for the Selective Service?

A: At age 18

A: At 18

68. Who is the Secretary of State now?

A: Dr. Condoleezza Rice

A: Condoleezza Rice

A: Dr. Rice

69. Who is the Attorney General now?

A: Alberto Gonzales

70. Is the current President in his first or second term?

A: Second

71. What is self-government?

A: Powers come from the people.

A: Government responds to the people.

72. Who governs the people in a self-governed country?

A: The people govern themselves.

A: The government elected by the people.

73. What is the “rule of law”?

A: Everyone must obey the law.

A: Leaders must obey the law.

A: Government must obey the law.

74. What are “inalienable rights”?

A: Individual rights that people are born with

75. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.

A: Any citizen over 18 can vote.

A: A citizen of any race can vote.

A: Any male or female citizen can vote. (Women and men can vote.)

A: You don't have to pay to vote. (You don't have to pay a poll tax to vote.)

76. Name one responsibility that is only for United States citizens.

A: Vote

A: Serve on a jury

77. Name two rights that are only for United States citizens.

A: The right to apply for a federal job

A: The right to vote

A: The right to run for office

78. Name two rights of everyone living in the U.S.

A: Freedom of expression

A: Freedom of speech

A: Freedom of assembly

A: Freedom to petition the government

A: Freedom of worship

A: The right to bear arms

79. What is the Pledge of Allegiance?

A: The promise of loyalty to the flag and the nation

80. Name one promise you make when you say the Oath of Allegiance.

A: To give up loyalty to other countries (I give up loyalty to my [old][first][other] country.)

A: To defend the Constitution and laws of the United States

A: To obey the laws of the United States

A: To serve in the United States military if needed (To fight for the United States [if needed].)

A: To serve the nation if needed (To do important work for the United States [if needed].)

A: To be loyal to the United States

81. Who can vote in the U.S.?

A: All citizens over 18

A: All registered citizens over 18

82. Name two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy.

A: Vote

A: Join a political party

A: Help out with a campaign

A: Join a civic group

A: Join a community group

A: Tell an elected official your opinion on an issue.

A: Call your Senators and Representatives

A: Publicly support or oppose an issue or policy

A: Run for office

A: Write to a newspaper

83. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?

A: By April 15th of every year

A: By April 15th

A: April 15

84. Name two of the natural, or inalienable, rights in the Declaration of Independence.

A: Life

A: Liberty

A: The pursuit of happiness

85. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

A: Thomas Jefferson

86. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?

A: July 4, 1776

87. Name one reason why the colonists came to America?

A: Freedom

A: Political liberty

A: Religious freedom

A: Economic opportunity

A: To practice their religion

A: To escape persecution

88. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?

A: The Constitution was written.

A: The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution.

89. Why did the colonists fight the British?

A: They had to pay high taxes but did not have any say about it. (Taxation without representation.)

A: The British army stayed in their houses. (boarding, quartering)

A: The British denied the colonists self-government.

90. When was the Constitution drafted?

A: 1787

91. There are 13 original states. Name three.

A: Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia.

92. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?

A: Africans

A: People from Africa

93. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?

A: The Native Americans

A: American Indians

94. Where did most of America's colonists come from before the Revolution?

A: Europe

95. Why were the colonists upset with the British government?

A: Stamp Act

A: They had to pay high taxes but did not have any say about it. (Taxation without representation.)

A: The British army stayed in their houses. (boarding, quartering)

A: Intolerable Acts

96. Name one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for.

A: U.S. diplomat

A: Oldest member of the Constitutional Convention

A: First Postmaster General of the United States

A: Writer of "Poor Richard's Almanac"

97. Name one famous battle from the Revolutionary War.

A: Lexington and Concord

A: Trenton

A: Princeton

A: Saratoga

A: Cowpens
A: Yorktown
A: Bunker Hill

98. Who is called the “Father of Our Country”?

A: George Washington

99. Who was the first President?

A: George Washington

100. Name one of the writers of the Federalist Papers?

A: James Madison
A: Alexander Hamilton
A: John Jay

101. What group of essays supported passage of the U.S. Constitution?

A: The Federalist Papers

102. Name one of the major American Indian tribes in the United States.

A: Cherokee, Seminoles, Creek, Choctaw, Arawak, Iroquois, Shawnee, Mohegan, Chippewa, Huron, Oneida, Sioux, Cheyenne, Lakotas, Crows, Blackfeet, Teton, Navajo, Apaches, Pueblo, Hopi, Inuit

[Adjudicators will be supplied with a complete list.]

103. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.

A: War of 1812, Mexican American War, Civil War, or Spanish-American War.

104. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?

A: The Louisiana Territory

A: Louisiana

105. What country sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States?

A: France

106. In 1803, the United States bought a large amount of land from France. Where was that land?

A: West of the Mississippi

A: The Western U.S.

A: The Louisiana Territory

107. Name one of the things that Abraham Lincoln did.

A: Saved (or preserved) the Union.

A: Freed the slaves

A: Led the U.S. during the Civil War.

108. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.

A: The Civil War

109. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.

A: Slavery

A: Economic reasons

A: States' rights

110. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

A: Freed slaves in the Confederacy
A: Freed slaves in the Confederate states
A: Freed slaves in most Southern states

111. What did the abolitionists try to end before the Civil War?

A: Slavery

112. What did Susan B. Anthony do?

A: She fought for women's rights.

113. Name one war fought in the United States in the 1900s.

A: World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, or Gulf (or Persian Gulf) War

114. Who was President during World War I?

A: Woodrow Wilson

115. The United States fought Japan, Germany, and Italy during which war?

A: World War II

116. What was the main concern of the United States during the Cold War?

A: The spread of communism

A: The Soviet Union [USSR and Russia are also acceptable.]

117. What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?

A: Terrorists attacked The United States.

118. What international organization was established after World War II (WWII) to keep the world at peace?

A: The United Nations

119. What alliance of North America and European countries was created during the Cold War?

A: NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

120. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?

A: Franklin Roosevelt

121. Which U.S. World War II general later became President?

A: Dwight Eisenhower

122. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

A: He fought for civil rights.

A: He strove for (worked for, fought for) equality for all Americans.

123. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a dream for America. What was his dream?

A: Equality for all Americans

A: Civil rights for all

124. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?

A: The civil rights movement

125. What is the longest river in the United States?

A: The Mississippi River

126. What ocean is on the west coast of the United States?

A: The Pacific Ocean

127. What country is on the northern border of the United States?

A: Canada

128. Where is the Grand Canyon?

A: Arizona

A: The Southwest

A: Along/on the Colorado River

129. Where is the Statue of Liberty?

A: New York Harbor

A: Liberty Island

[Also acceptable are New Jersey, near New York City, and on the Hudson (River).]

130. What country is on the southern border of the United States?

A: Mexico

131. Name one large mountain range in the United States.

A: The Rocky Mountains
A: The Appalachians
A: The Sierra Nevada
A: The Cascades

132. What is the tallest mountain in the United States?

A: Mt. McKinley
A: Denali

133. Name one U.S. territory.

A: American Samoa
A: The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
A: Guam
A: Puerto Rico
A: U.S. Virgin Islands

134. Name the state that is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

A: Hawaii

135. Name one state that borders Canada.

A: Alaska, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, or Washington

136. Name one state that borders on Mexico.

A: Arizona, California, New Mexico, or Texas

137. What is the capital of the U.S.?

A: Washington, D.C.

138. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?

A: Because there were 13 original colonies

A: Because the stripes represent the original colonies

139. Why do we have 13 stripes on the flag?

A: Because there were 13 original colonies

A: Because the stripes represent the original colonies

140. Why does the flag have 50 stars?

A: There is one star for each state.

A: Each star represents a state.

A: There are 50 states.

141. What is the name of the National Anthem?

A: The “Star-Spangled Banner”

142. On the Fourth of July we celebrate independence from what country?

A: Great Britain

143. When do we celebrate Independence Day?

A: July 4

144. Name two national U.S. holidays.

A: New Year's Day

A: Martin Luther King Day

A: Presidents' Day

A: Memorial Day

A: Independence Day

A: Labor Day

A: Columbus Day

A: Veterans Day

A: Thanksgiving

A: Christmas