

# Social Studies

40 questions

70 minutes

This Pretest is intended to give you an idea of the topics you need to study to pass the GED® Social Studies Test. Try to answer every question, in a quiet area and with enough time so that you are free from distractions. The usual time allotted for the test is 70 minutes. Remember that it is more important to think about every question than it is to finish ahead of time. Answers and explanations can be found at the end of the Pretest.

Questions 1–3 are based on the following chart:

## Principles of the U.S. Constitution

Principle	Meaning
Popular sovereignty	Power rests with the people.
Limited government	Government power should be limited, contained. Government officials must obey the rule of law.
Separation of powers	Executive, legislative, and judicial powers are distributed to different branches of government.
Checks and balances	Each branch has the ability to limit the power of other branches.
Republican government	Government is formed by officials elected by the people.
Federalism	Some powers are given to the federal government, some to state governments, and some to both.

- The Preamble to the Constitution states that "We the People of the United States . . . do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." Which principle does this statement embody?
  - federalism
  - limited government
  - popular sovereignty
  - separation of powers

## PRETEST

2. In 1920, the U.S. Senate voted against ratification of the Treaty of Versailles. What principle did this vote exemplify?
  - A. checks and balances
  - B. federalism
  - C. popular sovereignty
  - D. republican government
  
3. When the Bill of Rights was added to the U.S. Constitution, what principle was given greater strength?
  - A. checks and balances
  - B. limited government
  - C. republican government
  - D. separation of powers
  
4. Why does supply go up when new technology lowers production costs?
  - A. Suppliers can make higher profits with lower costs.
  - B. Demand for high-technology goods is high.
  - C. Government regulation of the product decreases.
  - D. Lower costs drive substitute goods out of the market.

## PRETEST

Questions 5–6 are based on the following chart:

### The Civil War Amendments

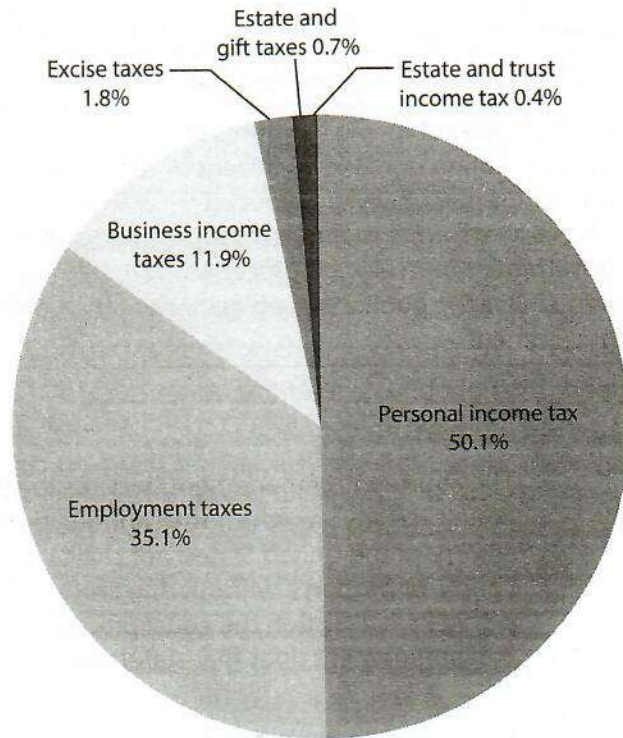
Amendment	Provisions	Date Ratified
Thirteenth	Abolishes slavery throughout the United States	1865
Fourteenth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Defines citizenship and the rights of citizens</li> <li>2. Protects voting rights of all citizens or the population basis for representation will be reduced</li> <li>3. Bars certain former members of the Confederate government from elected office</li> <li>4. Repudiates the public debt obligations of the Confederate government</li> </ol>	1868
Fifteenth	Extends the right to vote to African Americans	1870

5. The Fourteenth Amendment declares the following: "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Which provision of that amendment does that statement reflect?
  - A. first
  - B. second
  - C. third
  - D. fourth
6. Which statement *best* explains the sequence of these amendments?
  - A. First: slavery abolished; Second: right to vote of former enslaved males guaranteed; Third: citizenship of former enslaved people established
  - B. First: right to vote of former enslaved males guaranteed; Second: citizenship of former enslaved people established; Third: slavery abolished
  - C. First: citizenship of former enslaved people established; Second: slavery abolished; Third: right to vote of former enslaved males guaranteed
  - D. First: slavery abolished; Second: citizenship of former enslaved people established; Third: right to vote of former enslaved males guaranteed
7. Which level of government has the power to create local governments?
  - A. county
  - B. federal
  - C. municipal
  - D. state

## PRETEST

Question 8 is based on the following graph:

Internal Revenue Service Receipts by Category, 2010 (percentages)



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census *Statistical Abstract of 2012*.

8. Income taxes paid by individuals account for approximately how much more of Internal Revenue Service receipts than business income taxes?
- A. half as much
  - B. twice as much
  - C. four times more
  - D. five times more
9. Which of the following correctly states the law of supply?
- A. Supply of a product decreases as price increases.
  - B. Supply of a product increases as price decreases.
  - C. Supply of a product increases as demand decreases.
  - D. Supply of a product increases as price increases.

## PRETEST

*Questions 10–11 are based on the following chart:*

### Economic Systems

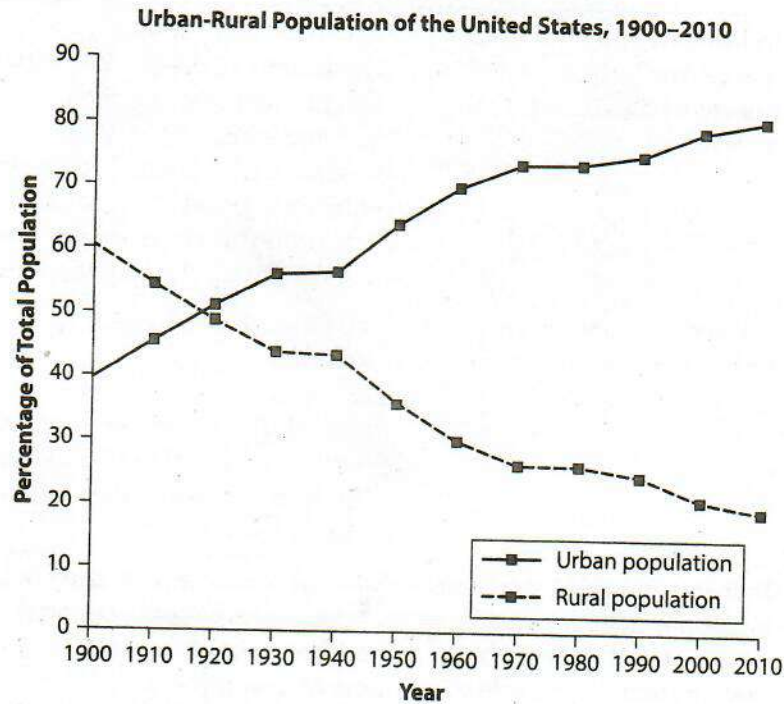
System	Characteristic	Benefits and Drawbacks
Traditional	Answers basic economic questions by following past patterns	Little freedom of choice Meets basic needs of society, but for limited population Uses resources fairly efficiently Low productivity Little innovation Little variety of goods and services
Market	Individuals and businesses answer the basic economic questions by acting on self-interest	High freedom of choice Opportunity of reward, but with risk High productivity High innovation Great variety of goods and services High-quality goods and services Little protection from market failures, such as monopoly, unfair practices, pollution, business cycle
Command	Government answers the basic economic questions	Low freedom of choice Low productivity Low innovation Relatively low variety of goods and services Relatively low quality of goods and services High level of security through guaranteed employment, social services
Mixed	Individuals answer the basic economic questions by acting on self-interest, but government plays a role to address market failures	Benefits of market economy but at slightly reduced levels (e.g., less freedom of choice) Reduced risks of market economy Cost of government

10. Based on the information in the chart, which type of economy is most likely the second most productive?
  - A. command
  - B. market
  - C. mixed
  - D. traditional
  
11. Which aspect of the U.S. economy reflects its roots in a capitalist, or market, economic system?
  - A. opportunities given entrepreneurs
  - B. product safety laws
  - C. regulation of monopolies
  - D. the Social Security system

## PRETEST

12. Which of the following illustrates a complementary good for dry cleaning, such that a decrease in the price of the good would cause increased demand for that service?
- A. wool suits
  - B. T-shirts
  - C. jeans
  - D. cotton socks

Questions 13–14 are based on the following graph:

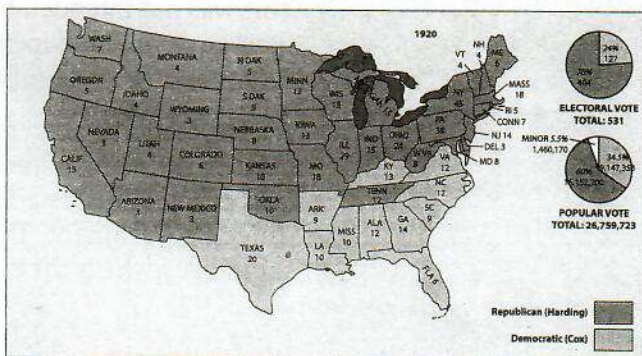
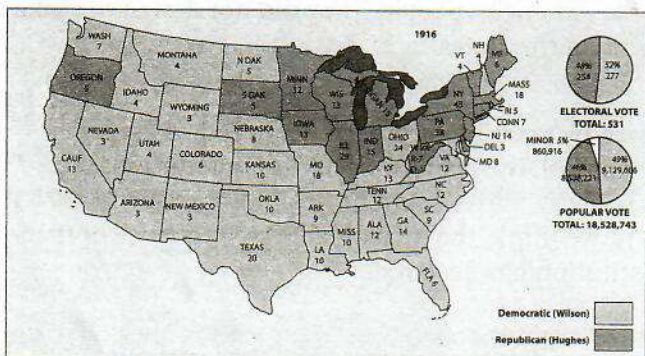
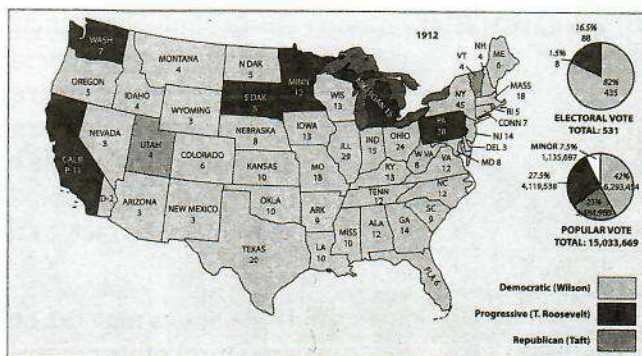
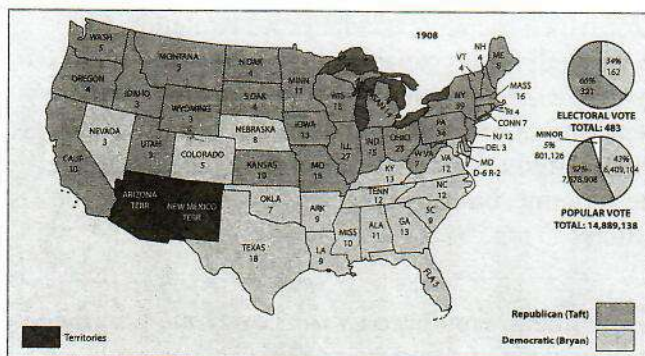


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

13. How much did the U.S. urban population change from 1950 to 2010?
- A. It approximately doubled.
  - B. It decreased by almost half.
  - C. It decreased to about a third.
  - D. It increased about 15 percentage points.
14. Which decade saw no growth in urbanization?
- A. 1900s
  - B. 1930s
  - C. 2000s
  - D. 2010s

**PRETEST**

Questions 15–17 are based on the following maps:



15. Which election shows the best result for a third-party candidate of the four elections?
  - A. 1908
  - B. 1912
  - C. 1916
  - D. 1920
  
16. Which statement explains why Arizona and New Mexico are not included in the election results in 1908?
  - A. They were territories and thus did not have eligible voters.
  - B. Their votes were counted too late to be in the final total.
  - C. They were still part of Mexico.
  - D. Their votes were counted with California's.
  
17. Which of these elections was the closest in the electoral college?
  - A. 1908
  - B. 1912
  - C. 1916
  - D. 1920

## PRETEST

Questions 18–19 are based on the following quotation:

“If we apply the principle for which the State of Maryland contends, to the constitution generally, we shall find it capable of changing totally the character of that instrument. We shall find it capable of arresting all the measures of the government, and of prostrating it at the foot of the States. The American people have declared their constitution, and the laws made in pursuance thereof, to be supreme; but this principle would transfer the supremacy, in fact, to the States.

If the States may tax one instrument, employed by the government in the execution of its powers, they may tax any and every other instrument. . . . This was not intended by the American people. They did not design to make their government dependent on the States. . . .

. . . The States have no power, by taxation or otherwise, to retard, impede, burden, or in any manner control, the operations of the constitutional laws enacted by Congress to carry into execution the powers vested in the general government. This is, we think, the unavoidable consequence of that supremacy which the constitution has declared.

We are unanimously of opinion, that the law passed by the legislature of Maryland, imposing a tax on the Bank of the United States, is unconstitutional and void.”

—Chief Justice John Marshall,  
*McCullough v. Maryland* (1819)

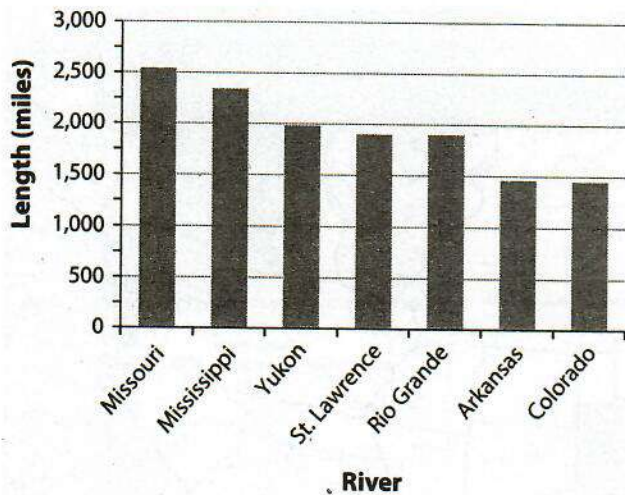
18. In this decision, Chief Justice John Marshall set what precedent?
- A. declaring a law passed by Congress to be unconstitutional
  - B. declaring a state law to be unconstitutional
  - C. declaring an action taken by the president to be unconstitutional
  - D. overturning an earlier Supreme Court decision
19. On which part of the U.S. Constitution did Marshall base his decision?
- A. the commerce clause
  - B. due process protections
  - C. the judicial review clause
  - D. the supremacy clause



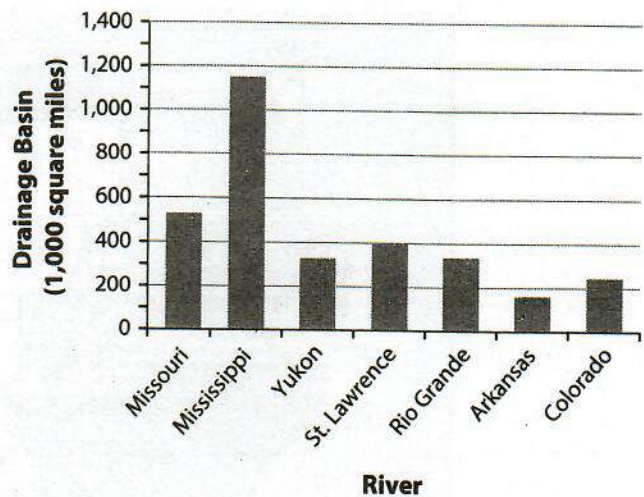
## PRETEST

Questions 20–21 are based on the following graphs:

**Lengths of Major U.S. Rivers**



**Drainage Areas of Major U.S. Rivers**



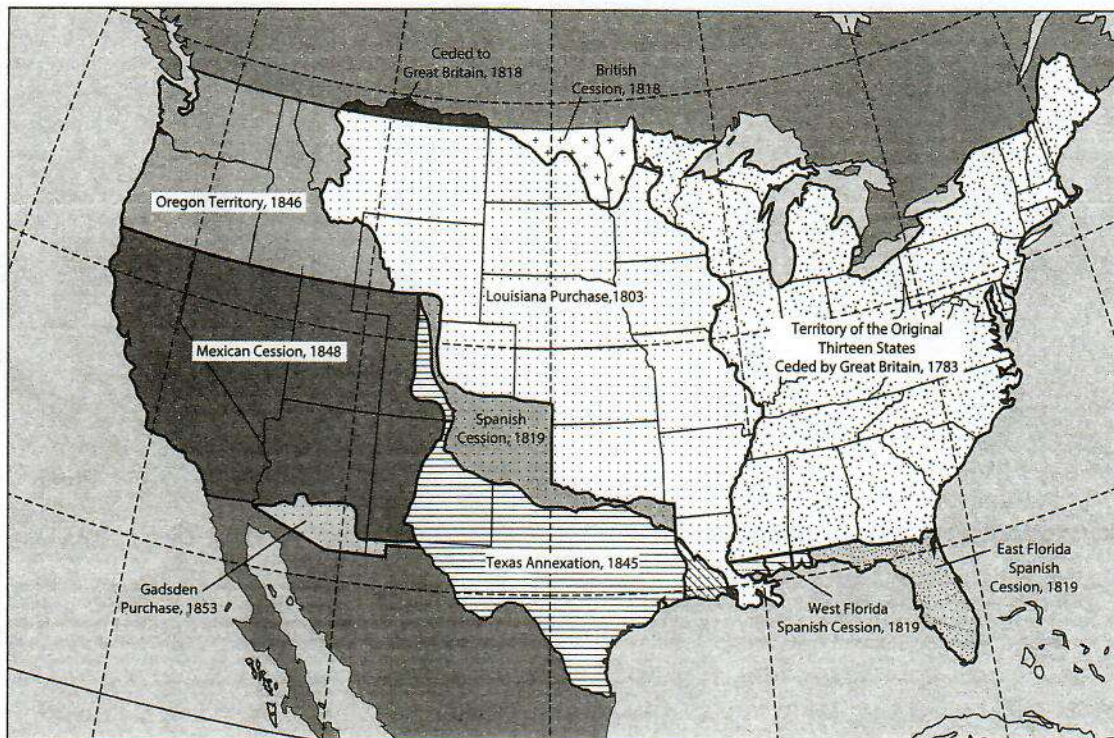
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census *Statistical Abstract of 2012*.

20. Which is the longest river in the United States, and which has the largest drainage basin?
- Missouri; Mississippi
  - Mississippi; Missouri
  - Yukon; Mississippi
  - St. Lawrence; Rio Grande
21. Which statement *best* explains why rivers that are longer than other rivers nevertheless may have smaller drainage basins?
- Drainage decreases as length increases.
  - The shorter the river, the wider and larger the drainage basin.
  - Drainage depends on how many tributaries a river has.
  - Drainage basin size has no relation to a river's length.

## PRETEST

Questions 22–24 are based on the following map:

**Territorial Expansion of the United States**



22. How and when did the United States gain what is now Florida?
- from Britain in 1783
  - from Spain in 1819
  - in the Louisiana Purchase in 1803
  - from Mexico in 1848
23. Which list shows the correct order in which the four listed states were acquired?
- Pennsylvania, Missouri, Florida, California
  - Louisiana, Michigan, Texas, Oregon
  - New York, Florida, Nevada, New Mexico
  - Kansas, Virginia, Washington, Utah
24. Which states that are now part of the United States do not appear on this map?
- Georgia and Alabama
  - Hawaii and Alaska
  - Massachusetts and Ohio
  - Oklahoma and Virginia

## PRETEST

## Answers and Explanations

1. **C** "We the people . . . do ordain and establish" means that the people have the power. This is popular sovereignty.
2. **A** The president makes treaties, but the Senate must approve. This is our system of checks and balances.
3. **B** The amendments in the Bill of Rights establish the rights of the people and limit the powers of the federal government.
4. **A** When production costs are lower, profits are higher. Suppliers increase supply to gain more of those higher profits.
5. **A** The quote relates to the rights of citizens, which is the first provision.
6. **D** In 1865 slavery is abolished; in 1868 citizenship is granted to former slaves; in 1870 African American men are given the right to vote.
7. **C** Local governments are established by municipal governments.
8. **C** Individual taxes account for 50.1% and business income taxes account for 11.9%.  $50.1 \div 11.9 = 4.21$ . This is approximately four times more.
9. **D** The law of supply states that as price increases, supply increases.
10. **C** The chart states that market economies are highly productive and that mixed economies have the same benefits, though slightly reduced. Therefore, mixed economy is likely to be the second most productive.
11. **A** A market economy has high freedom of choice and high innovation. This favors entrepreneurs.
12. **A** If wool suits were cheaper, demand for them would be higher. Because wool suits must be dry cleaned, this would also increase demand for that service.
13. **D** The urban population in 1950 was approximately 63%. In 2010, it was approximately 78%. That is an increase of 15%.
14. **B** Urban growth stayed the same from 1930–1940 and then again from 1970–1980. Only the 1930s is an answer choice.
15. **B** In 1912, the third-party candidate received electoral votes and a large percentage of the popular vote.
16. **A** According to the map key, Arizona and New Mexico were territories rather than states in 1908.
17. **C** In 1916, the electoral college was nearly equal: 254 to 277.
18. **B** The last paragraph says that the state law is unconstitutional.
19. **D** The first and third paragraphs mention the supremacy of the U.S. Constitution.
20. **A** According to the charts, the Missouri River is the longest at 2500 miles, and the Mississippi River has the largest drainage basin at approximately 1.15 million square miles.
21. **C** If a river has many tributaries, it spreads out the drainage, resulting in a larger drainage basin.
22. **B** The map shows that Florida became part of the United States through "Spanish Cession, 1819."
23. **A** Pennsylvania in 1783, Missouri in 1803, Florida in 1819, and California in 1848.