Literacy Tests

Alabama, Part A

- In Part "A" of a typical Alabama literacy test, the applicant was given a selection of the Constitution to read aloud. The registrar could assign a long complex section filled with legalese and convoluted sentences, or he could select a simple one or two sentence section.

- For example, a White applicant might be given:

- SECTION 20: That no person shall be imprisoned for debt.

- **While a Black applicant might be given:**

SECTION 260: The income arising from the sixteenth section trust fund, the surplus revenue fund, until it is called for by the United States government, and the funds enumerated in sections 257 and 258 of this Constitution, together with a special annual tax of thirty cents on each one hundred dollars of taxable property in this state, which the legislature shall levy, shall be applied to the support and maintenance of the public schools, and it shall be the duty of the legislature to increase the public school fund from time to time as the necessity therefor and the condition of the treasury and the resources of the state may justify; provided, that nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to authorize the legislature to levy in any one year a greater rate of state taxation for all purposes, including schools, than sixty-five cents on each one hundred dollars' worth of taxable property; and provided further, that nothing herein contained shall prevent the legislature from first providing for the payment of the bonded indebtedness of the state and interest thereon out of all the revenue of the state.

- **The Registrar marked each word that in his opinion you mispronounced. In some counties, you had to orally interpret the section to the registrar's satisfaction. You then had to either copy out by hand a section of the Constitution, or write it down from dictation as the registrar spoke (mumbled) it. White applicants usually were allowed to copy, Black applicants usually had to take dictation. The Registrar then judged whether you were "literate" or "illiterate." His judgment was final and could not be appealed.**

- **After that, you were given Parts "B" and "C" which were two sets of four written questions that you had to answer.**

Alabama, B, C examples

1. What body can try impeachments of the president of the United States? <u>Senate</u>

2. Check the applicable definition for responsibility:

   <u> X </u> a duty

   <u>   </u> a speech

   <u>   </u> failure

3. Name the attorney general of the United States. (acting) <u>Nicholas Katzenbach</u>

4. Women may now serve on juries in Alabama State courts. <u>True</u>

1. If a person charged with treason denies his guilt, how many persons must testify against him before he can be convicted? Two

2. At what time of day on January 20 each four years does the term of the president of the United States end? 12 noon

3. If the president does not wish to sign a bill, how many days is he allowed in which to return it to Congress for reconsideration? Ten

4. If a bill is passed by Congress and the President refuses to sign it and does not send it back to Congress in session within the specified period of time, is the bill defeated or does it become law? It becomes law unless Congress adjourns before the expiration of 10 days

Louisiana Literacy Test

- Literacy Test (This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education.)

- Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure. You have 10 minutes.

- 1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.

- 2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.

- 3. Cross out the longest word in this line.

- 4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.

- 5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.

- 6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.

- 7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
- 8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.

    Z V S B D M K Y T P H C
- 9. Draw a line through the two letters below that comes last in the alphabet.

    Z V B D M K T P H S Y C
- 10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L"

  ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

- 11. Cross out the number not necessary, when making the number below one million.
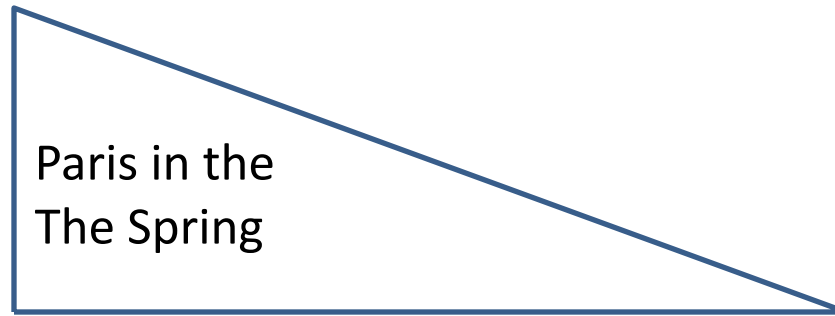
    10000000000

- 12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 3 and above circle 4.

① 1   ② 2   ③ 3   ④ 4   ⑤ 5

- 13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.

25 31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20

_____

- 14. Write down, on the line provided, what you read in the triangle below:

Paris in the
The Spring

_____

- 15. In the third square below, write the second letter of the fourth word.

- 16. Write right from the left to the right as you see it spelled here.

- 17. Divide a vertical line in two equal parts by bisecting it with a curved horizontal line

  that is only straight at its spot bisection of the vertical.

17. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

2 4 8 16 ___

18. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

3 6 9 ___ 15

- 18. Write every other word in this first line and print every third word in the same line but capitalize the fifth word that you write.
- 19. Draw five circles that have one common inter-locking part.

20. Spell backwards, forwards.

21. Print the word vote upside down, but in the correct order.

22. Place a cross over the tenth letter in this line, a line under the first space in this sentence, and circle around the last the in the second line of this sentence.

23. Draw a figure that is square in shape. Divide it in half by drawing a straight line from its northeast corner to its southwest corner, and then divide it once more by drawing a broken line from the middle of its western side to the middle of its eastern side.

15. In the space below, write the word "noise" backwards and place a dot over what would be its second letter should it have been written forward.

16. Draw a triangle with a blackened circle that overlaps only its left corner.