

# F.O.R.C.E. STUDY GUIDE - CHECKS AND BALANCES

## Content-based Questions

1. What are the 3 branches of government, and name an example of an elected or appointed office in each branch.
2. Identify the correct type of branch of government for each question below:
  - a. Which branch administers the laws ?
  - b. Which branch makes the laws?
  - c. Which branch evaluates the constitutionality of the laws?
3. Were the Anti-Federalists for or against the ratification of the new Constitution? Did they value a strong central (“federal”) government, or prefer that decisions be controlled by the state?
4. Match the correct length of term with the correct public office position:

1. President of the US _____	A. Life-long term
2. Supreme Court Judge _____	B. 2 years
3. Senator _____	C. 4 years
4. Representative _____	D. 6 years
5. What is the Electoral College?
6. In each of these elections, are you voting directly for the candidate, or does the Electoral College submit the votes? Circle the correct one.

a. President/VP of the US	Popular/direct vote	Electoral College
b. Governor of a state	Popular/direct vote	Electoral College
c. Mayor of a city	Popular/direct vote	Electoral College

## ***Engaging the Material***

1. Whereas legislators and the President are intended to serve all the people, while also being responsive to those who elected them, the Supreme Court justices are not supposed to do those things. They are supposed to only think about the constitutionality of a law – not whether it does what they think is best for the public or what voters think about it. What are some dangers currently facing the Supreme Court in terms of justices experiencing pressure from political parties or platforms?

2. Discuss some unintended modern effects of gerrymandering, based on changes in society since the system was created.

3. In your own state, does gerrymandering motivate or demotivate citizens to actively participate in the election process? Explain.

4. The Electoral College was created as a concession to \_\_\_\_\_, in order to induce them to vote for the ratification of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Why was it needed at the time? Does the reason it was created still exist? Is the Electoral College still helpful to our government? Why or why not?

5. What was the original design of a filibuster? How did it change in 1917? Further change in 1975? In your own opinion, is it currently serving ANY of its intended purposes? Is it harming the process of democracy?

## ***Engaging the Material***

6. Do you agree or disagree with the statement below – and why?

*“Common Cause has summed the situation up: ‘American political campaigns are now financed through a system of legalized bribery.’ ”*

7. You hear a lot of complaints about certain political processes that USED to serve democracy no longer being helpful, because of changes in our society over a couple centuries. What do you think when you hear someone say, “If it was good enough for the Founding Fathers, it’s good enough for me!”?

In addition, what are your own thoughts about processes that were created long, long ago, and no longer serve a modern society in the way they were intended to – such as:

- The Electoral College method of electing the president of the US?
- Gerrymandering
- Filibuster rules changing recently
- Allowing money to be given to a campaign by corporations rather than individuals, by calling the money a form of “free speech”, and not requiring the sources of the money to be identified

## **Content-based Answer Guide**

1. Executive, legislative, and judicial

Examples include → Congress (legislative), Cabinet (executive), Supreme Court (judicial)

2. Executive branch administers the law.

Legislative branch makes the laws.

Judicial branch evaluates the constitutionality of the laws.

3. Anti-Federalists were against the ratification of the new Constitution. They preferred the decisions be controlled by the state

4. President of the US → C. 4 years

Supreme Court judge → Life-long term

Senator → 6 years

Representative → 2 years

5. The Electoral College is the body of electors (who represent the states) who vote for the election of the president and vice president.

6. President/VP of the US → Electoral College

Governor of a state → Popular/direct vote

Mayor of a city → Popular/direct vote