

F.O.R.C.E. STUDY GUIDE — INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTITUTION

Content-based Questions

1. Why is civic knowledge crucial in the US compared to other countries?
2. Define the following terms: "civic literacy" and "civic religion"
3. Did the Planting Fathers come to the New World to establish a "religion-free" society? What church were the Puritans escaping from? What denomination has the Puritan religion evolved into?
4. How did the invention of the printing press tie in with religion?
5. What does the term "libertarian" mean?
6. A monarch's authority comes from where? A Republic's authority comes from where?
7. Under the 1777 Article of Confederation, was the central government (the part applying to all the colonies) strong or weak? Why?
8. Did the Founders create a central government that was weaker or stronger than before? Provide an example.
9. Give at least 3 examples of people who had no vote or voice in the government.
10. Did the Constitution create a direct or a representative form of government? Explain.
11. What does it mean if the Bill of Rights is "anti-majoritarian"? Provide 2 – 3 examples.
12. Give some examples of situations where the Bill of Rights does NOT apply.

Engaging the Material

1. People interact with the government on a daily basis. What are some examples of those interactions? In what ways do you personally interact with the government?
2. Think of a time when someone misused a lot of time or effort because they did not know where to go for answers or help from a government agency. If it got resolved, how?
3. Give an example of someone living in the US who came from a country with a significantly different political system. Share a real or imagined situation where they might get something extremely wrong, by acting on their assumptions from their place of origin.
4. Name a few impactful social changes after the Planting Fathers (e.g Pilgrims) arrived, but before the “Founding Fathers” (e.g George Washington) drafted the Constitution.
5. Give an example of any two of these kinds of activities:
Scientific --- philosophical --- ideological --- religious

Content-based Answer Guide

1. The US is more diverse than most other countries; not all citizens share the same political history, religious beliefs, race/ethnicity, etc.

2. Civic literacy → an understanding as to what laws and policies are established; knowing what one should do when being involved with the government; knowledge of individual rights; being informed to evaluate government's conduct of people's business

Civic religion → a common civic identity; civic religion in the US is through documents (such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights) and the governing philosophy that those documents embody a equal representation of all citizens

3. The Planting Fathers came to the New World to worship the correct god and the correct church, and their right to establish a government that would require their neighbors to do the same thing.

- the Church of England
- Protestant

4. It empowered individuals to read and interpret the Bible for themselves; they did not need to rely on a religious figure, such as a Catholic priest

5. Libertarian → the freedom for an individual to do their own thing, as long as there is no harm done and the individual is able to respect the equal rights of others

6. Monarch's authority comes from God; Republic's authority comes from the people and their elected representatives

7. It was weak;

Various of reasons:

- Each state had only one vote; central government was required to receive a majority of votes in order to pass laws
- The central government had no authority to tax the states, which meant it could not maintain an effective military, pay back its debt from wars, or trade effectively (in addition to lack of common currency)

8. Stronger than before; Examples can vary

9. Slaves, women, African Americans, Native Americans, etc.

10. Representative; Citizens would elect people to public office to represent their interests. Representatives were supposed to be well-educated, well-informed, and best suited to study the issues and legislate on the behalf of their community.

11. The majority of citizens or a majority of lawmakers make most government decisions, but those decisions cannot infringe on the liberties protected by the Bill of Rights. Examples: Cannot ban individuals from reading "dirty" books; cannot force individuals to attend church .

12. Examples can vary.