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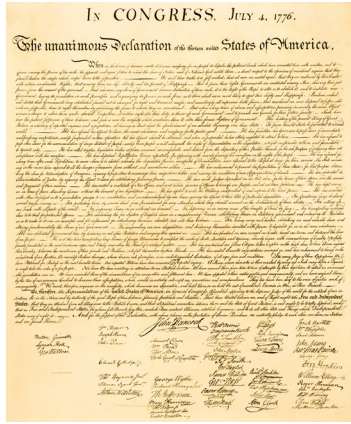

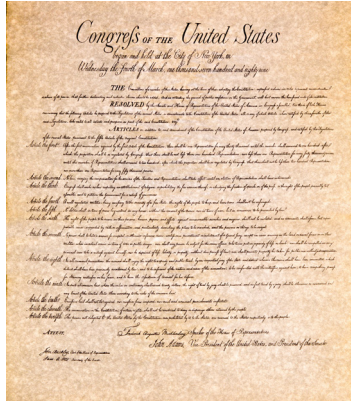
The *Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom* is the permanent home of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the Bill of Rights, located in the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. These historic documents are displayed in a cathedral-like, dimly lit rotunda, which is open to the public. A visit can be both a moving and educational experience, deepening your appreciation for the principles that continue to guide American society.

The nation's Founding Fathers drafted these documents during dramatic, fast-moving events. They form the foundation of the United States and confirm that people are born with certain natural rights, including "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," that does not come from presidents, kings, or charters. This nation's founding documents secure these and other rights of the American people.

Preserving the Documents

On December 13, 1952, the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence were sealed in helium-filled cases, placed in wooden crates, and transported by an armored car to the National Archives Exhibition Hall in Washington, D.C. In 2001, the documents were placed in upgraded, state-of-the-art encasements with the latest preservation technology, replacing the original 1950s encasements.

While the original, signed Declaration is housed in the Charters of Freedom, 26 other copies are known to exist and are referred to as the *Dunlap BroadSides*. Over 200 copies were initially produced by John Dunlap, a printer in Philadelphia, on the night of July 4, 1776, to spread the news of American Independence. This urgent document was sent to colonial leaders, local governments, military officers, and newspapers.

Document Question	Declaration of Independence	U.S. Constitution	Bill of Rights
For the exact wording of each document, read the original transcripts or refer to your pocket guide.			
What year was it ratified?	1776	1787	1791
Where was it written?	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	New York City
Why was it written?	To formally announce and justify the American colonies' decision to break away from British rule, outlining principles of individual rights and self-governance.	To replace the ineffective Articles of Confederation with a structured, balanced system of government that could govern effectively, unify the states, and protect freedoms.	To protect citizens' freedoms, address government power concerns, fulfill promises made during ratification, and set a precedent for future amendments.
Who wrote it?	Thomas Jefferson	James Madison	James Madison
How many words in the document?	1,458 words (1 page) including signatures	4,543 words (4 pages) including signatures	760 words (1 page)
What is stated in the Preamble of the document?	"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."	"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."	"The Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added...:"

Six other principles of the U.S. Constitution guide our government's structure and function besides protecting individual rights. These principles reflect the framers' intentions to create a government that balances power and promotes the common good. In upcoming units, we will cover these principles in more detail.

1. Checks and Balances

Summary: This principle ensures that no single branch of government can dominate. Each of the three branches has the ability to check the others.

Examples in the Constitution: Presidential veto power in Article 1, Section 7.

2. Separation of Powers

Summary: To prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful, the Constitution divides the federal government into three branches.

Examples in the Constitution: Articles 1, 2, and 3 outlines the responsibilities of the three branches.

3. Popular Sovereignty

Summary: The authority for government originates from the people and they rule through their representatives. Direct democracy actions like *referendums* and *initiatives* embody popular sovereignty. This also includes the concept of *republicanism* where people elect representatives to govern of their behalf.

Examples in the Constitution: The preamble (We the People..) and the Ninth Amendment.

4. Federalism

Summary: The sharing of power between the federal, state, and local governments. In many ways, this is a natural division of functions. Local governments handle local affairs; national affairs by the federal government.

While each of the 50 states has its own constitution, all provisions for state constitutions must comply with the U.S. Constitution.

Examples in the Constitution: The 10th Amendment.

5. Judicial Review

Summary: The judiciary has the power to review laws and government actions to determine if they violate the Constitution.

Examples in the Constitution: While judicial review is not within the text of the Constitution itself, this principle was established in the case of *Marbury v. Madison* (1803).

6. Limited Government

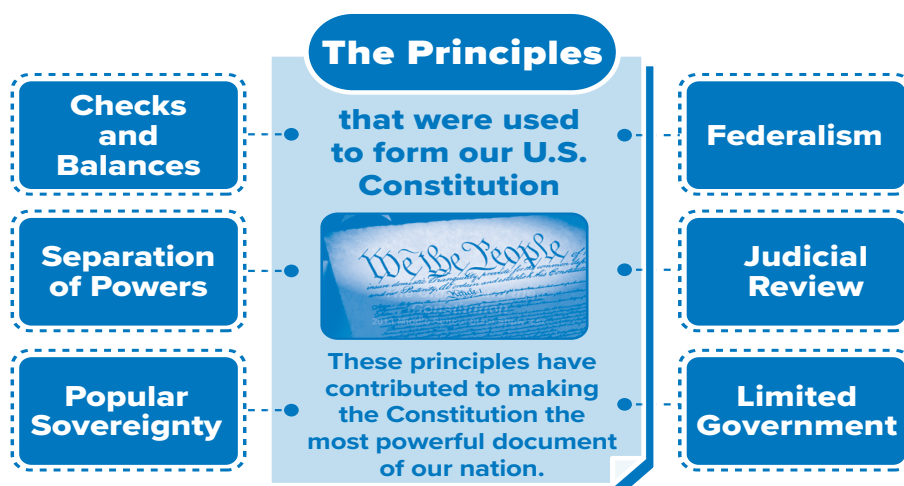
Summary: The government can only exercise the powers granted to it by the Constitution. Everyone, including government officials, is subject to the law.

Examples in the Constitution: The *enumerated powers*, as listed in Article I, Section 8, give specific powers granted to Congress, such as the power to tax, regulate commerce, and declare war. Congress can only exercise powers explicitly listed in the Constitution; all other powers are reserved for the states or the people.

QUESTIONS

WHICH PRINCIPLE? Identify the principle that best describes the following statements. Put the number of the principle(s) listed in the corresponding title box in the space provided (more than one principle may apply).

- 1. Only the federal government can print money.
- 2. Congress passes a law that the president then vetoes.
- 3. The government gets its power from the people.
- 4. The president must follow the law.
- 5. The Senate confirms a presidential nomination.
- 6. A referendum to build a new school is passed by the voters of your city.
- 7. The Supreme Court declares a law unconstitutional.
- 8. Congress can impeach a president if they believe powers were abused.
- 9. A representative holds a town hall meeting on banning plastic bags to get voters' opinions.



These principles have made the Constitution the most powerful document and guideline for our nation. These principles work together to balance power, ensure accountability, and protect individual rights within the framework of the government.

You will learn more about these concepts in upcoming units.

“Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives . . .” — U.S. Constitution, Article 2, Section 1

Perhaps the most prolonged debate at the Constitutional Convention concerned the method of selecting the president. An early suggestion was to give this power to Congress. But that would have destroyed the idea of the separation of powers. How could we have three branches of government, each checking the other if the legislative branch (the Congress) picked the head of the executive branch (the president)?

The writers of the Constitution also weren’t ready to give the selection of the president to the people or the “common man.” So they wrote a compromise into Article 2, Section 1 of the Constitution. The compromise set up a system of electors to select the president. These electors came to be known as the *Electoral College*, but the Constitution itself does not mention the term “Electoral College.”

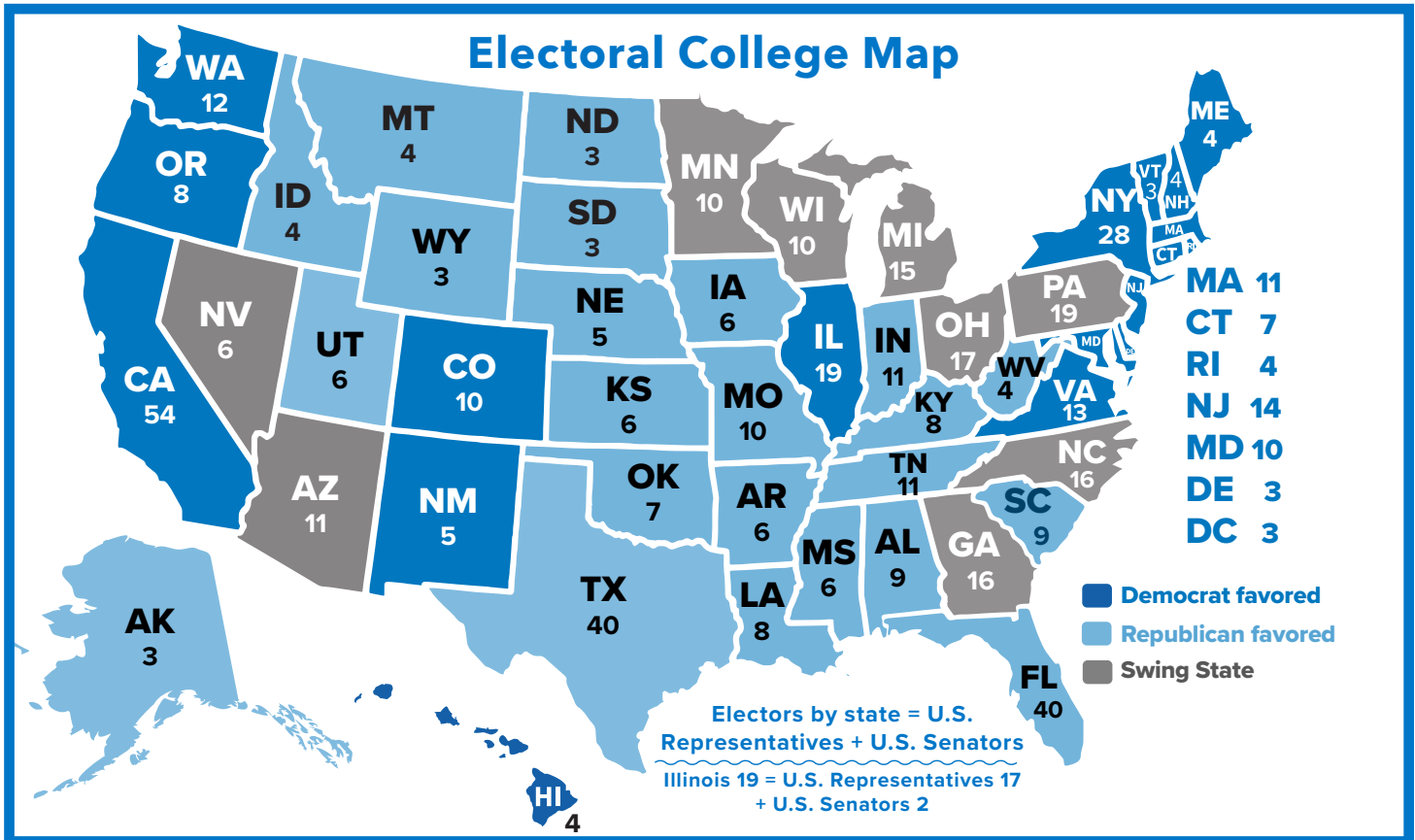
This unique election method was modified by the 12th and 23rd Amendments. Before 1961, the voters in Washington, D.C., didn’t get to vote for the president at all. This was not considered fair in the capital of our country. The 23rd Amendment was added in 1961, giving three electoral votes for Washington, D.C. That made a total of 538 electors (electoral votes for each state equals the number of representatives plus two for the senators). A majority of 270 or more would be necessary to select the president. The map below shows the distribution of the electoral votes based on the 2020 reapportionment from the 2020 Census.

To summarize, if a candidate gets the most popular (people) votes in the state, the “electors” will then cast their votes the same way. All the electoral votes for the state (except for Maine and Nebraska) will go to the winner of the state. The writers of the Constitution also thought that the Electoral College gave states with a small population more equal weight in the presidential election.

One of the problems political scientists see in the Electoral College is that it allows a person to be elected president who has not won the popular vote in the country. In our growing beliefs in the power and rights of democracy in our nation, that could be a problem. Because all the electoral votes of a state go to the candidate who wins the election in that state, whether the candidate wins by a single vote or a million votes, it is possible to be elected president without having the most votes.

That has not happened very often, but it did occur in 2000 when George W. Bush became president and again recently in the 2016 election. Donald Trump became president even though Hillary Clinton won a majority of the popular votes. And, because this has happened so recently, Americans are debating the Electoral College’s pros and cons. Since a change in the electoral vote would require a constitutional amendment, the change will not come quickly. Supporters of the current system say that it has served the nation well and forces candidates to gain broad geographic support rather than concentrating only on large metropolitan areas.

continued



“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” – The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Before we start the state section, it is an excellent time to review the foundation of our democracy. The legacy to make that system of government work is for people to have faith in each other.

Why Do We Have A Government?

People know we have a government, but some need to learn what our government means. They may need to understand what government does and why we have it. They may need to realize how it affects our lives or why taxes are necessary. .

An easy way to decide what government means to our society is to imagine life without it. With no government, there would be no United States, no Illinois. There would be no order of loyalty in our lives other than in our immediate family. All the government services we take for granted, from the post office to the armed forces, would not exist. We would have no protection against those who would do us harm, and we would be at the mercy of anyone. The strong would dominate the weak. Our lives would be filled with uncertainty and danger.

Belief in government and the willingness to support it makes us citizens of our nation and marks us as civilized persons. This support gives us government services and advantages we could not attain alone.

What Can You Do For Your Country?

But there is more to a government than what government does for us. To have the advantages of a governed, civilized society, a citizen must give in return. As President John F. Kennedy said in his first inaugural address, “. . . *ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.*”

Each citizen must abide by rules or laws and give up a bit of his or her absolute freedom to make our government progress for everyone’s good. The government is effective only as long as people respect it and work for it. People who expect the blessings of a democracy must be ready to meet the obligations of a democratic government. For every right, we may find a corresponding duty. For example, the right to trial by jury has the corresponding duty of jury service when a citizen is called. A citizen who expects the right to be represented by intelligent and honest representatives has the corresponding duty to vote wisely and to keep informed of government issues.

Government exists so that we might enjoy our rights and meet our duties.

A Guarantee of Freedoms

To review, the quote from the First Amendment lists the five freedoms it protects: speech, religion, press,

assembly, and the right to petition the government. Together, these five guaranteed freedoms make the people of the United States of America the freest in the world.

There is no “legal age” you have to reach to exercise your First Amendment freedoms. They are guaranteed to you the day you are born. There is also no citizenship requirement for First Amendment protection.

Exercise Your Freedom Responsibly

However, what happens if I do not agree with the government or the rules established by our leaders? The First Amendment protects the right of people to assemble peacefully. People may protest for a variety of reasons:

- *To voice their opinion on law or policy;*
- *To show their support for a candidate or policy;*
- *To raise awareness for a cause;*
- *To express their disapproval.*

There are times when the government must put limits on a protest. The government can break up a protest if there is a “clear and present danger,” — meaning that violence is imminent. Government officials can limit the time, place, and manner in which people can assemble as long as there is a reason for these limits and the limits apply to all protestors.

Students should remember that the Bill of Rights, including the First Amendment, was not easily created; there needed to be much debate and constructive arguments among our Founding Fathers. It arose through great contention and controversy, illustrating the early — and continuing — workings of the U.S. government and our legal system..

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- ___ 1. A government is optional for a civilized society.
- ___ 2. The First Amendment applies to everyone.
- ___ 3. Serving on a jury is considered a civic duty.
- ___ 4. The government is not allowed to put any limits on a protest.
- ___ 5. The Constitution is considered our “supreme law of the land.”

SHORT ANSWER - Name the five freedoms protected by the First Amendment. _____

State House of Representatives

There are 118 state representatives in the *lower house* of the Illinois General Assembly. A representative's term is for two years. He or she may be re-elected. Elections are held in even-numbered years for all 118 representatives. Each member represents approximately 109,000 residents of Illinois.

Illinois Government Trifecta

A state government trifecta is a term to describe when one political party holds majorities in both chambers of the state legislature and the governor's office. Continuing a trend that started in 2002, Illinois Democrats have had supermajorities in the General Assembly. Furthermore, with J.B. Pritzker's reelection in 2022, the Democrats have kept the trifecta control. With this control, passing significant legislation such as clean energy bills is easier.

House Leadership

The House's presiding officer is the House speaker, elected by the representatives themselves. The majority party (currently Democrats) determines the nominee for speaker. The control of the House is with this majority party. Like the Senate president, the speaker has considerable power in deciding what legislation moves through the lawmaking process.

The speaker helps control the flow of legislation and the schedule for the House of Representatives and when and if a bill is called for a vote. He or she also maintains order on the House floor, decides legislative issues, and works with minority leaders to resolve the problems hindering legislation. Due to the speaker's considerable power, any bill he or she opposes has little chance of moving out of the House.

The majority party (currently Democrats) and minority party (currently Republicans) also elect a leader, deputy leaders, assistant leaders, and a party conference chairperson. These leaders provide direction and advice to members on proposed legislation and party business.

QUESTIONS

WHICH BODY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

The following details may closely match the state Senate or state House. In some cases, that may relate to both or neither of these. Answer **Senate (S)**, **House (H)**, **both (B)**, or **neither (N)**.

- ___ 1. Elected by the people.
- ___ 2. Have 118 members.
- ___ 3. Have 59 members.
- ___ 4. Are parts of the General Assembly.
- ___ 5. Receive salary of \$85,000.
- ___ 6. The speaker is the presiding officer.
- ___ 7. The governor is the presiding officer.
- ___ 8. Term is always two years.
- ___ 9. Term varies between two and four years.
- ___ 10. Start impeach proceedings.
- ___ 11. Must be at least 21 years old.
- ___ 12. Must live in district at least two years.
- ___ 13. Approves appointments of the governor.
- ___ 14. Declares laws unconstitutional.
- ___ 15. Considered the lower house.
- ___ 16. Members elect a president to lead group.
- ___ 17. Tries impeachment cases.
- ___ 18. Meets in Springfield.
- ___ 19. Members cannot be re-elected.
- ___ 20. Makes laws for every state.

Great Seal of Illinois and Exercise

The *Great Seal of the State of Illinois* is the official emblem of the state. It signifies the formal nature of a document produced by Illinois, such as laws enacted by the General Assembly.



The reproduction of the official *Great Seal of Illinois* is shown. This basic design was first conceived the year that Illinois gained statehood. Research the Great Seal and answer the following questions:

1. What does the date on the bottom arc of the seal represent? _____
2. What does the year 1868 represent? _____
3. How many stars and stripes are on the shield? _____
What does this represent? _____
4. What do the words represent on the banner held in the eagle's beak? _____

In addition to the municipalities discussed earlier, other local governments support the people of Illinois. These include *special-purpose districts*, *counties*, and *townships*. If you add all the local government units, you will find that Illinois has the most of any state, over 6,900 local governments. These local governments influence much of state and federal policies.

Special-Purpose Districts

To provide specialized services for the people of Illinois, various special-purpose districts have been created. An example of a very common special-purpose district is the public school district. Other special-purpose districts would be forest preserve, transit authority, library district, mosquito abatement district, park district, and soil conservation district.

Illinois Special-Purpose Districts

Illinois has more special-purpose districts than any other state in the nation (3,145). Special districts can provide basic services, such as fire protection and water supply, to more quality-of-life enhancing services, like museum facilities, parks, and zoos.

County Government

There are 102 counties in Illinois. All counties carry out state policy of a general nature: they enforce laws, prosecute offenders, build and maintain roads, keep records, conduct elections, assess property, and collect taxes. Also, counties are authorized to provide a variety of local government services, such as public health and planning, licensing, regulation of land use, and establishing such diverse functions as health care, hospitals, parks, and libraries.

Every county has a governing body known as the county board. Other officers include sheriff, clerk, and treasurer. A coroner, recorder, assessor, auditor, and others can be either appointed or elected, depending on the county. The *county seat* is the town that is the governmental center of each county and the base for these local government officials.

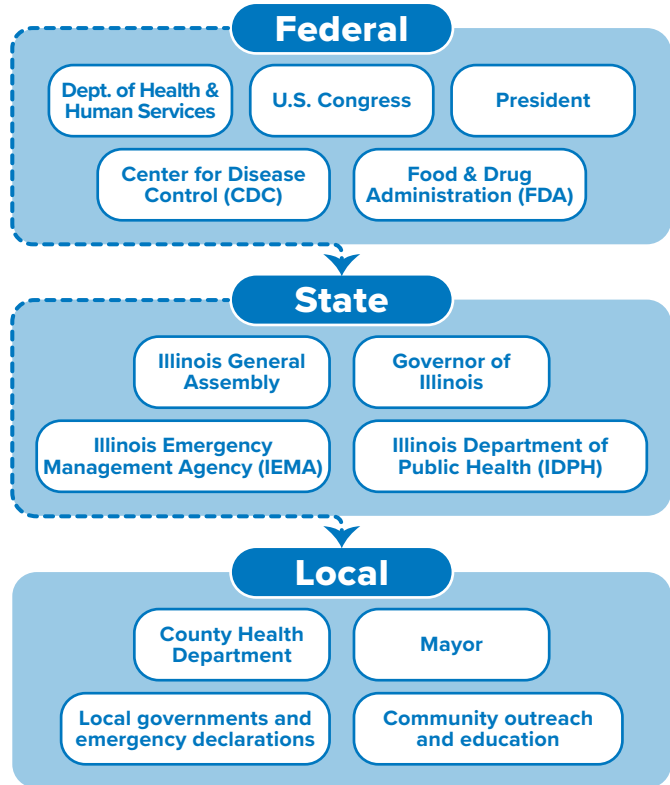
The Illinois Constitution also allows counties to obtain home rule status. Home rule municipalities are autonomous and free to exercise governing authority independent of the General Assembly and governor in most cases. A county has home rule status if it has a chief executive officer elected at large and passes a home rule referendum. Cook County is currently the only county in Illinois that has home rule status.

Townships

The counties are divided into townships. Like the county, the township has certain specific powers and is subject to state restriction and supervision. Township affairs are administered by elected officials, including supervisor, clerk, assessor, and trustees. The three primary functions of township government in Illinois are (1) construction and maintenance of rural roads and bridges, (2) general assistance to the needy, and (3) assessment of property. There are also miscellaneous functions, such as voter registration, cemeteries, and mental health facilities.

The Levels of Government

There are three primary levels of government: federal, state, and local. The three levels played a significant role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal government provided guidance and resources to state and local governments to help them navigate the challenges of the pandemic.



QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a *T* or *F* in the space provided.

- ___ 1. There are 102 counties in Illinois.
- ___ 2. There are more townships than counties.
- ___ 3. A school district is a special-purpose district.
- ___ 4. A sheriff is a township officer.
- ___ 5. Counties carry out state policy.
- ___ 6. Illinois has the most local government units of any state.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

- 1. In which county do you reside? _____
- 2. Where is your county seat located? _____
- 3. What township do you reside in? _____
- 4. Name one county service that directly affects you.

SHORT ANSWER

What is home rule? _____

The following test will help you prepare for your final Illinois Constitution test. It has questions similar to ones you will find on your final. It is suggested you write your answers on a piece of paper so you can take the test a number of times. You will find the correct answers at the bottom of Page 85.

Hard work on this page will assure you of a better grade on your final exam. Be sure to look up any answers you do not understand or see your teacher for an explanation.

MATCHING. Match the person or body in **Column A** with the correct branch of state government in **Column B**. Put the letter of the correct answer in the space provided.

Column A

- ___ 1. The Illinois Governor
- ___ 2. The Illinois House of Representatives
- ___ 3. The Illinois State Supreme Court
- ___ 4. Illinois Circuit Courts
- ___ 5. Lieutenant Governor
- ___ 6. Illinois State Senate
- ___ 7. Attorney General
- ___ 8. Comptroller

Column B

- a. The Legislative Branch
- b. The Judicial Branch
- c. The Executive Branch

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Write the letter of the correct answer in the space provided.

9. _____ To pass a bill in the General Assembly, which of the following statements is NOT correct?
 - a. bill must be read on 3 different days
 - b. governor is allowed 5 days to review
 - c. bills are confined to one subject
 - d. bills must pass both chambers by majority vote
10. _____ Which city has NEVER hosted the state capital?
 - a. Chicago
 - b. Springfield
 - c. Vandalia
 - d. Kaskaskia
11. _____ Which reason best explains why the Illinois Constitution was revised in 1970?
 - a. the previous constitution was lost in a fire
 - b. influences from the Civil Rights movement
 - c. women were given the right to vote
 - d. set term limits for the governor
12. _____ What is the main purpose of the Illinois Constitution's Bill of Rights?
 - a. to ensure citizen's rights and freedoms
 - b. to discuss legislative power
 - c. to equalize powers of the three branches
 - d. to exceed the powers in the U.S. Constitution
13. _____ What action is the responsibility of state executive branch?
 - a. set local and county tax rates
 - b. recommend a state budget
 - c. appoint Senators to the General Assembly
 - d. approve amendments from state Legislature
14. _____ Your dog chewed through a neighbors fence and she wants compensation to fix it. What court would hear the case if there was a dispute?
 - a. Illinois Supreme Court
 - b. Illinois Court of Appeals
 - c. Small Claims Court
 - d. Federal District Court
15. _____ Which of the following is NOT protected by the Illinois Bill of Rights?
 - a. exclusion from military service
 - b. right to bear arms
 - c. freedom of speech
 - d. right to a fair trial
16. _____ Which of the following vetoes is NOT a power of the Illinois governor?
 - a. amendatory veto
 - b. all or nothing veto
 - c. regular veto
 - d. line item veto
17. _____ What form of city government involves hiring a professionally trained manager to run the city?
 - a. commission
 - b. trustee-village
 - c. strong-mayor
 - d. council-manager
18. _____ What form of city government has an elected mayor and commissioners running the city?
 - a. commission
 - b. trustee-village
 - c. strong-mayor
 - d. council-manager

continued