



1965 ALABAMA LITERACY TEST

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students experience the injustice of voter discrimination.

MATERIALS

1965 Alabama Literacy Test handout;
Answers to Alabama Literacy Test handout

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate a *1965 Alabama Literacy Test* for each student. Note: this test should be administered after students have studied both the Constitution and the obstruction of African-American voting. (Students should be aware, for instance, that white voters did not have to take these tests because of “Grandfather Clauses.”)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *The U.S. Constitution is so important to citizenship that you should know it perfectly without needing previous study time. No textbooks may be consulted.*
- ✓ Pass out the *1965 Alabama Literacy Test* and provide 25 minutes of serious, uninterrupted and monitored test time.
- ✓ Students will trade papers and score the tests as you read each item with its full correct response.
- ✓ Say, *You just took the 1965 Alabama Literacy Test to determine whether you were qualified to vote. If you missed more than seven answers, the registrars would have refused you.*

- ✓ Ask for students to share their thoughts on the difficulty and fairness of the exam. (Most will comment on how difficult and unfair it was.)
- ✓ Give your students the task of finding primary sources that describe what it was like to experience voter injustice before the civil rights movement.
- ✓ Have your students share the accounts of voter discrimination they found.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Were you upset when you thought this test might harm your grade? How would you feel if it robbed you of your right to vote?*
- ★ *Why did Southerners want to keep African-Americans away from the polls? What were they afraid of? (political power, economics, etc.)*
- ★ *Nationally, what are the requirements today for registration and voting in any region of the United States?*

MORE!

Assign students to write a short story about a character that took a literacy test in the South and failed it (or passed it). What happened next?

VOTE QUOTE

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” – Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thanks to Dr. Robert Marlon, University of Redlands, now deceased, who obtained the 1965 Alabama Literacy Test during his involvement with the civil rights movement.



1965 ALABAMA LITERACY TEST

Name _____

1. Which of the following is a right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights?

- Public Education Employment
- Voting Trial by Jury

2. The federal census of population is taken each five years. True False

3. If a person is indicted for a crime, name two rights which he has.

4. A U.S. senator elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date? _____

5. A President elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date? _____

6. Which definition applies to the word "amendment?"

- Proposed change, as in a Constitution
- Making of peace between nations at war
- A part of the government

7. A person appointed to the U.S. Supreme court is appointed for a term of _____.

8. When the Constitution was approved by the original colonies, how many states had to ratify it in order for it to be in effect? _____

9. Does enumeration affect the income tax levied on citizens in various states? _____

10. Persons opposed to swearing in an oath may say, instead: (solemnly _____)

11. To serve as President of the United States, a person must have attained:

- 25 35 40 45 years

12. What words are required by law to be on all coins and paper currency of the U.S.?

13. The Supreme Court is the chief lawmaking body of the state. True False

14. If a law passed by a state is contrary to provisions of the U.S. Constitution, which law prevails?

15. If a vacancy occurs in the U.S. Senate, the state must hold an election, but meanwhile the place may be filled by a temporary appointment made by _____

16. A U.S. senator is elected for a term of _____ years.

17. Appropriation of money for the armed services can be only for a period limited to _____ years.

18. The chief executive and the administrative offices make up the _____ branch of government.

19. Who passes laws dealing with piracy?

20. The number of representatives which a state is entitled to have in the House of Representatives is based on _____

21. The Constitution protects an individual against punishments which are _____ and _____.



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22. When a jury has heard and rendered a verdict in a case, and the judgment on the verdict has become final, the defendant cannot again be brought to trial for the same cause. True False

23. Name two levels of government which can levy taxes: _____

24. Communism was the type of government in: U.S. Russia England

25. Cases tried before a court of law are two types, civil and _____

26. By a majority vote of the members of Congress, the Congress can change provisions of the Constitution of the U.S. True False

27. For security, each state has a right to form a _____

28. The electoral vote for President is counted in the presence of two bodies. Name them: _____

29. If no candidate for President receives a majority of the electoral vote, who decides who will become President? _____

30. Of the original 13 states, the one with the largest representation in the first Congress was _____

31. Of which branch of government is the Speaker of the House a part? Executive Legislative Judicial

32. Capital punishment is the giving of a death sentence. True False

33. In case the President is unable to perform the duties of his office, who assumes them? _____

34. "Involuntary servitude" is permitted in the U.S. upon conviction of a crime. True False

35. If a state is a party to a case, the Constitution provides that original jurisdiction shall be in _____

36. Congress passes laws regulating cases which are included in those over which the U.S. Supreme Court has _____ jurisdiction.

37. Which of the following is a right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution? Public Housing Education Voting Trial by Jury

38. The Legislatures of the states decide how presidential electors may be chosen. True False

39. If it were proposed to join Alabama and Mississippi to form one state, what groups would have to vote approval in order for this to be done? _____

40. The Vice President presides over _____

41. The Constitution limits the size of the District of Columbia to _____

42. The only laws which can be passed to apply to an area in a federal arsenal are those passed by _____ provided consent for the purchase of the land is given by the _____

43. In which document or writing is the "Bill of Rights" found? _____

44. Of which branch of government is a Supreme Court justice a part? Executive Legislative Judicial

45. If no person receives a majority of the electoral votes, the Vice President is chosen by the Senate. True False



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46. Name two things which the states are forbidden to do by the U.S. Constitution.

47. If election of the President becomes the duty of the U.S. House of Representatives and it fails to act, who becomes President and when?

48. How many votes must a person receive in order to become President if the election is decided by the U.S. House of Representatives? _____

49. How many states were required to approve the original Constitution in order for it to be in effect?

50. Check the offenses which, if you are convicted of them, disqualify you for voting:

____Murder ____Issuing worthless checks
____Petty larceny ____Manufacturing whiskey

51. The Congress decides in what manner states elect presidential electors. ____True ____False

52. Name two of the purposes of the U.S. Constitution. _____

53. Congress is composed of _____

54. All legislative powers granted in the U.S. Constitution may legally be used only by _____

55. The population census is required to be made every ____ years.

56. Impeachments of U.S. officials are tried by _____

57. If an effort to impeach the President of the U.S. is made, who presides at the trial?

58. On the impeachment of the chief justice of the Supreme court of the U.S., who tries the case?

59. Money is coined by order of:
____U.S. Congress ____The President's Cabinet
____State Legislatures

60. Persons elected to cast a state's vote for U.S. President and Vice President are called presidential _____

61. Name one power which is exclusively legislative and is mentioned in one of the parts of the U.S. Constitution above. _____

62. If a person flees from justice into another state, who has authority to ask for his return? _____

63. Whose duty is it to keep Congress informed of the state of the union? _____

64. If the two houses of Congress cannot agree on adjournment, who sets the time?

65. When presidential electors meet to cast ballots for President, must all electors in a state vote for the same person for President or can they vote for different persons if they so choose? _____

66. After the presidential electors have voted, to whom do they send the count of their votes?

67. The power to declare war is vested in _____

68. Any power and rights not given to the U.S. or prohibited to the states by the U.S. Constitution are specified as belonging to whom? _____



ANSWERS TO ALABAMA LITERACY TEST

1. Trial by Jury only
2. False (every 10 years)
3. Habeas Corpus (immediate presentation of charges); lawyer; speedy trial
4. January 3
5. January 20
6. Proposed change, as in a Constitution
7. Life (with good behavior)
8. Nine
9. Yes
10. Affirm
11. 35
12. In God We Trust
13. False
14. U.S. Constitution
15. The governor
16. Six
17. Two
18. Executive
19. Congress
20. Population (as determined by census)
less untaxed Indians
21. Cruel and unusual
22. True
23. State and local
24. Russia
25. Criminal
26. False
27. Militia
28. House of Representatives, Senate
29. House of Representatives
30. Virginia
31. Legislative
32. True
33. The Vice President
34. True
35. The Supreme Court
36. Co-appellate
37. Trial by jury
38. True
39. Congress and the legislatures of both states
40. the Senate
41. 10 miles square
42. Congress; state legislatures
43. Constitution
44. Judicial
45. True
46. Coin money; make treaties
47. The Vice President, until the House acts
48. 26
49. 9
50. Murder
51. False
52. (Preamble statements) “to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”
53. House of Representatives and Senate
54. Congress
55. 10
56. The Senate
57. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
58. The Senate
59. The U. S. Congress
60. Electors
61. Pass laws, coin money, declare war
62. The Governor
63. The President
64. The President
65. They can vote for different people.
66. Vice President (President of the Senate)
67. Congress
68. The states; the people