

Answer Key for 2023 Civics Challenge

To be used for reference by Judges and volunteer keeping score at the Civics Challenge.

ROUND 1

R1: Question 1: Which state was not represented at the Constitutional Convention?

- a. Delaware
- b. Rhode Island**
- c. South Carolina
- d. Maryland

The state of Rhode Island refused to send any representation to the Philadelphia or Constitutional Convention in 1787. Rhode Island was the last state to ratify the Constitution on May 29, 1790 by a vote of 34-32.

R1: Question 2: What is the longest possible time a president can now serve?

- a. 4 years
- b. 8 years
- c. 10 Years**
- d. 12 years

Amendment 22 of the Constitution states: "No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of President more than once." Therefore, the total length of time that any person could serve as President is ten years.

R1: Question 3: TRUE OR FALSE: A person who is 25 years old can serve as a US Senator.

BONUS: Who is the youngest person recently elected to the US Congress and how old is that person?

Bonus answer: Maxwell Frost, 25 years old, a Representative from Florida.

Senators must be at least 30 years old, per Article 1 Section 3 of the constitution, which says, "No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen."

R1-Question 4: TRUE OR FALSE: The Constitution specifies an odd number of justices on the Supreme Court.

The constitution does not specify any number. Article 3, Section 1 says only "The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish."

R1: Question 5: In the Constitution, as originally written, who was granted the right to vote?

- a. Anyone over the age of 21 and living here for more than 3 years

- b. Anyone over 21 who owned at least 10 acres of land
- c. Any white male property owner over the age of 21
- d. **The constitution is silent on the matter, leaving it up to the states.**

Article 1 Section 4 says "The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators."

R1: Question 6: What recent ballot question amended the Massachusetts constitution?

Answer: The Fair Share Amendment, also known as the Millionaire's Tax.

The amendment was passed by voters in Nov. 2022 and took effect Jan 1 2023. It reads: "To provide the resources for quality public education and affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation, all revenues received in accordance with this paragraph shall be expended, subject to appropriation, only for these purposes. In addition to the taxes on income otherwise authorized under this Article, there shall be an additional tax of 4 percent on that portion of annual taxable income in excess of \$1,000,000 (one million dollars) reported on any return related to those taxes. To ensure that this additional tax continues to apply only to the commonwealth's highest income taxpayers, this \$1,000,000 (one million dollars) income level shall be adjusted annually to reflect any increases in the cost of living by the same method used for federal income tax brackets. This paragraph shall apply to all tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2023."

R1: Question 7: TRUE OR FALSE: A person can serve as Mayor of Newton for no more than 2 terms of 4 years each.

There is no term limit for the mayor in Newton.

R1: Question 8: Name three countries, other than Russia, that border Ukraine.

BONUS: How many countries border Ukraine in total?

Answer: Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia.

Bonus Answer: 7 = the 6 above plus Russia.

R1: Question 9: In what year were all Native Americans granted citizenship, thus giving them the right to vote in national elections?

- a. 1854
- b. 1920
- c. **1924**
- d. 1964

The Snyder Act of 1924 admitted Native Americans born in the U.S. to full U.S. citizenship. Though the Fifteenth Amendment, passed in 1870, granted all U.S. citizens the right to vote regardless of race, it wasn't until the Snyder Act that Native Americans could enjoy the rights granted by this amendment.

R1: Question 10: When were residents of Washington DC first allowed to vote in Presidential elections?

- A. 1790
- B. 1812
- C. 1935
- D. 1964

The 23rd Amendment, adopted in 1961, entitles the District to the same number of electoral votes as that of the least populous state in the election of the president and vice president. The amendment was ratified in 1961, so the first presidential election in which the District of Columbia participated was the election of 1964. Starting with that election, the District of Columbia has consistently had three members of the Electoral College, this being the constitutionally implied minimum number it is entitled to.

As the federal capital, the [District of Columbia](#) is a special [federal district](#), not a state, and therefore does not have voting representation in Congress. The Constitution grants Congress [exclusive jurisdiction over the District](#) in "all cases whatsoever". In the [House of Representatives](#), the District is represented by a [delegate](#), who is not allowed to vote on the [House floor](#) but can vote on procedural matters and in [congressional committees](#). D.C. residents have no representation in the [Senate](#).

Lighting Round: Electoral College

1. When are the Electoral College Votes tallied to determine the next president and vice president?
January 6

2. Who presides over the counting of the Electoral College Votes? **The President of the Senate, aka the Vice President.**

3. How many total electoral college votes are there? **538**

4. What is the number of electoral votes needed to win the presidency? **270**

5. What is the minimum number of electoral college votes for each state? **3**

It is based on the state's representation in Congress, and each state has 2 Senators plus a minimum of one member of the House Representatives.

6. How many states have the minimum number of electoral college votes? **7**

BONUS: Name as many as you can. Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming

7. Which state has the greatest number of electoral college votes? **California**

8. How many electoral votes does it have? **55**

9. How many electoral college votes does Massachusetts have? **11**

10. Which president's election depended upon the vote of the House of Representatives?
Thomas Jefferson

11. What happens if no candidate wins a majority of electoral college votes?

The House of Representatives selects the President from the three candidates who received the most electoral college votes. Each state gets only a single vote, determined by all the Representatives from that state.

This method for choosing the president is initially explained in Article 2, Section 1, Clause 3 of the Constitution, but a more in depth explanation is found in the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution (adopted in 1804): "... and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President." This amendment was passed due to the unique circumstances of the presidential election of 1800, which resulted in a tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, in which the winner was decided by the House of Representatives. Aaron Burr was made Vice President according to the then laws.

12. Five presidential candidates have won the popular vote but lost the election due to electoral college votes. Name as many as you can.

- Andrew Jackson in 1824 (to John Quincy Adams)
- Samuel Tilden in 1876 (to Rutherford B. Hayes)
- Grover Cleveland in 1888 (to Benjamin Harrison)
- Al Gore in 2000 (to George W. Bush)
- Hillary Clinton in 2016 (to Donald J. Trump)

13. Which two states do not assign all their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who wins a plurality of the popular vote? **Maine and Nevada**

Maine and Nebraska each award one of their electors to the candidate who wins a plurality of the statewide vote; the remaining electors are allocated to the winners of the plurality vote in the states' congressional districts.

14. If enacted, the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact would ensure that the winner of the popular vote wins the presidency. How many states have signed the compact so far? **15**

Together, those states hold 196 electoral votes. If states holding 270 electoral votes sign the compact, then the compact will be enacted and the popular vote will determine the winner of the presidency..

15. Originally, the presidential candidate with the second highest vote total was elected Vice President. Which amendment changed that system? **12th Amendment**

That amendment changed the original system, in which electors cast 2 votes for president and the second-highest vote getter became Vice President, to one in which distinct votes were cast separately for each office. This was prompted by the presidential election of 1800, which resulted in a tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, forcing the choice of president to the House of Representatives. Aaron Burr was made Vice President according to the then laws.

ROUND 2

R2: Question 1: How many US cabinet members are there (when all are fully confirmed)?

BONUS: Name up to four cabinet positions.

- A. 10
- B. 14
- C. 16 (Vice President + 15 department heads)**
- D. 20

Bonus Answers: Vice President; Attorney General; Secretaries of: Agriculture; Commerce; Defense; Education; Energy; Health & Human Services; Homeland Security; Housing and Urban Development; Interior; Labor; State; Transportation; Treasury; Veterans Affairs.

R2: Question 2: What is the term used to describe drawing legislative districts to benefit a party, group, or incumbent? **BONUS:** What is the origin of the term?

Answer: **Gerrymandering**

Bonus Answer: a word created by combining then Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry's name with "salamander."

The word was created in reaction to a redrawing of Massachusetts Senate election districts in which one of the contorted districts was said to resemble a salamander. A political cartoon depicting a strange animal with claws, wings and a dragon-like head that supposedly resembled the oddly shaped district helped spread and sustain the popularity of the term.

R2: Question 3: The 2010 Citizens United decision by the Supreme Court allowed corporations and other outside groups:

- a. Unlimited donations to political parties
- b. Unlimited donations to political campaigns
- c. Unlimited independent expenditures for electioneering activities**
- d. All of the above

R2: Question 4: How many states automatically send ballots to every eligible voter, without voters having to request a ballot? **BONUS:** Name up to four states.

- a. 5
- b. 8**
- c. 12
- d. 30

Bonus Answer: California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington.

R2: Question 5: Approximately, how many people does a Massachusetts state representative represent?

BONUS: How many state representatives are there in the Massachusetts General Court?"

- A. 10,000
- B. 20,000
- C. 30,000
- D. 40,000

Bonus Answer: 160

R2: Question 6: How many special elections has Newton held to ask voters for prop 2.5 overrides?
BONUS: Other than this year's election, how many override elections have succeeded?

Answer: 5 (elections in 1990, 2002, 2008, 2013, 2023)

Bonus Answer: 2 (in 2002 and 2013)

Voters passed previous override proposals in 2002 and 2013. In 2023, voters approved the 2 debt exclusions on the ballot, but the operating override failed.

State data on debt exclusions:

https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Votes.Prop2_5.DebtExclusionVotes

State data on operating overrides:

https://dlsgateway.dor.state.ma.us/reports/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=Votes.Prop2_5.OverrideUnderride

From the [Newton Beacon](#): "Newton voters approved overrides for \$11.5 million and \$8.4 million in 2002 and 2013, respectively. But they voted down a \$5 million override in 1991 [*state website said vote was in 1990*] and a \$12 million override in 2008."

In 2002 voters approved an override of \$11.5 million.

In 2013 they approved an override of \$8.4 million which included funds for the new Zervas Elementary School building, and the Fire Headquarters and Fire Station 3 buildings.

The override of 2008 failed. That \$12 million proposal – what would have been the most expensive override in the state's history – lost by a clear margin after months of criticism for then-Mayor David Cohen, who had proposed the override.

R2: Question 7: How many countries are in NATO?

Bonus: Finland was recently approved to join NATO. What other countries are being considered for membership?

- a. 12
- b. 17
- c. 24
- d. 31

Bonus Answer: Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia, Ukraine, and Sweden.

There are currently 31 member states of NATO. The 12 founding states, who signed the initial 1949 treaty, are: United States, United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal.

Greece and Turkey joined the alliance in 1952, with Spain joining in 1982. West Germany joined in 1955, with East Germany assimilating into the alliance upon the reunification of Germany in 1990. Since 1997, NATO has expanded further east to include Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia. The most recent additions to the alliance are Montenegro in 2017, North Macedonia in 2020, and Finland, in April of 2023.

R2: Question 8: Donald Trump is the third president in US history to be impeached. Name the other two.

Answer: **Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton**

R2: Question 9: What was the first state to permanently allow women to serve as jurors?

- a. Massachusetts
- b. California
- c. New York
- d. Utah**

The territory of Wyoming permitted female jurors in 1870, but the right was rescinded the following year when a new territory chief justice was installed.

While the Civil Rights Act of 1957 gave women the right to serve on federal juries, there's quite a time spread among the states when they permitted women to serve as jurors in state trials. Utah was the first in 1898; Mississippi was the last in 1968. Massachusetts first allowed women jurors in 1950.

R2: Question 10: Name the grandfather-grandson pair of presidents.

BONUS: Name some other related pairs of presidents.

Answer: Benjamin Harrison (the 23rd president) was the grandson of William Henry Harrison (the 9th president).

Bonus Answers:

- John Quincy Adams (the 6th president) was the son of John Adams (the 2nd president)
- James Madison (the 4th president) and Zachary Taylor (the 12th president) were second cousins
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt (the 32nd president) was a fifth cousin of Theodore Roosevelt (the 26th president)
- George W. Bush was the son of George H.W. Bush

ROUND 3

R3: Question 1: What was the "Great Compromise" of the Constitutional Convention?

- a. Slavery
- b. Taxation
- c. Representation in Congress
- d. All of the above

The "Great Compromise" established two houses of Congress, one house (the Senate) that would give each state equal representation and another house (the House of Representatives) that would give each state representation based on population size.

R3: Question 2: How long must a person have lived in the US in order to run for President?

Answer: 14 years.

R3: Question 3: Which city has never been the site of a session of the US Congress?

- a. Richmond, Virginia
- b. Baltimore, Maryland
- c. Princeton, New Jersey
- d. Trenton, New Jersey

Before the capital of the U.S. was established, Congress met in eight different cities, including Baltimore, Princeton and Trenton, but never Richmond.

R3: Question 4: TRUE OR FALSE: The target of a grand jury investigation has the right to appear before that jury.

R3: Question 5: What is the name for a type of independent political action committee which may raise unlimited sums of money from corporations, unions, and individuals but is not permitted to contribute to or coordinate directly with parties or candidates?

Answer: **Super PAC**

R3: Question 6: How are judges in Massachusetts seated?

- a. elected by the voters
- b. appointed by the Attorney General
- c. appointed solely by the Governor
- d. **appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the elected Governor's Council**

R3: Question 7: The City Council has 6 Council Standing Committees. Name two.

BONUS: Name any additional committees.

Answer: **Finance, Land Use, Programs & Services, Public Facilities, Public Safety & Transportation, Zoning & Planning**

R3: Question 8: How many states have legalized the use of recreational marijuana?

- a. 10
- b. 22**
- c. 23
- d. 37

22 as of last week when new Delaware law was signed. The medical use of cannabis is legal with a doctor's recommendation in 37 states, four out of five permanently inhabited U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia (D.C.)

The recreational use of cannabis has been legalized in 22 states plus Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and D.C.

Another 10 states have decriminalized its use.

States that have legalized recreational use of marijuana: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington (including states that have passed legislation to legalize but the law has not yet gone into effect)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legality_of_cannabis_by_U.S._jurisdiction

R3: Question 9: When was the first presidential pardon issued?

- a. 1795**
- b. 1868
- c. 1921
- d. 1974

The first presidential pardon was issued in 1795 by President George Washington when he pardoned two men sentenced to hang for treason. They had organized the [Whiskey Rebellion](#), an insurrection among distillers in Pennsylvania who were angry over a steep tax levied by Congress on spirits to help pay the national debt. Washington and Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton disagreed over how to handle the rebellion.

R3: Question 10: After losing his bid for re-election for president in 2020, President Donald Trump did not attend the inauguration of his successor, Joe Biden. Four other former presidents also refused to attend their successor's inauguration. Name one.

BONUS: Name as many others as you can.

Answer: John Adams (1801), John Quincy Adams (1829), Andrew Johnson (1869), Richard Nixon (1974).

After losing his bid for re-election, President John Adams left Washington D.C. the day Thomas Jefferson was to be sworn in as the third president of the United States. In 1829, his son, John Quincy Adams, declined to attend the inauguration of his successor, Andrew Jackson. Andrew Johnson, having survived an impeachment, chose to forego Ulysses S. Grant's inauguration ceremony in 1869. In 1974, after resigning in the wake of the Watergate scandal, Richard Nixon left the White House before Gerald Ford was sworn in.

FINAL ROUND

Final Round: Question 1: In January 2023, it took 15 votes by the House of Representatives to choose the Speaker of the House. Prior to that, when was the last time it took more than one vote to elect a Speaker?

Answer: **1923.**

The last time a vote for speaker went to multiple ballots was in 1923, when a bloc of Republicans refused to reelect Representative Frederick Huntington Gillett, a patrician Massachusetts Republican. Gillett didn't emerge victorious until the ninth ballot, with a tally of 215 votes – the lowest total of any speaker since the House reached its modern size.

BONUS: How many votes did it take?

Bonus answer: 9

- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/01/03/kevin-mccarthy-will-learn-his-fate-today/> - heading "A history of speaker fights"
- <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/01/03/nation/last-time-house-speaker-vote-went-multiple-ballots-it-was-100-years-ago-mass-republican/>

Final Round: Question 2: How many delegates attended the Constitutional Convention?

Answer: **55**

Final Round: Question 3: In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Federal Assaults Weapons Ban, which included a 10 year prohibition on the manufacture for civilian use of certain semi-automatic firearms that were defined as assault weapons as well as certain ammunition magazines that were defined as large capacity. Three former presidents wrote to support the bill. Name them.

BONUS: Which Senator authored the bill that became the law?"

Answer: **Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan.**

Bonus: **Senator Dianne Feinstein of California.**

EXTRA QUESTIONS

Extra Question 1: The first European group on the North American continent to elect its government was...

- a. **Jamestown Plantation**
- b. Plimoth Plantation
- c. Nova Scotia town of Port Royal
- d. Spanish Florida port of St. Augustine

<https://www.nps.gov/jame/learn/historyculture/the-first-legislative-assembly.htm>

Extra Question 2: The first state to ratify the Constitution?

- a. Pennsylvania
- b. Massachusetts
- c. New York
- d. **Delaware**