

Government Unit: Constitutional Scenarios

Sample scenario:

Tessa Dinsmore, age 50, is an American citizen of 20 years. She wants to run for office. May she run for the Senate?

Sample response:

Answer: Yes, Ms. Dinsmore may run for the Senate. **Article and Section numbers:** Article I, Section 3

Direct quotation: The Constitution states that a Senator must have “attained to the Age of thirty Years” and have “been nine Years a Citizen of the United States.”

1. A small community in southern Indiana wants to pass an amendment that would ban “flag burning” in the United States. Who would they need to contact to propose such an amendment?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

2. The Senate and the House of Representatives have passed a bill requiring all teenagers, including females, to shave their head. How can this bill be stopped from becoming a law?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

3. Austrian-born Arnold Schwarzenegger became a U.S. citizen in 1963. He was a 2-term governor of California. Why did he not have the option to run for President of the United States in 2004?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

4. President Jones wants Catherine Meek to be a justice on the Supreme Court. What steps must be taken in order for her to become a Supreme Court justice?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

5. In an effort to preserve the environment, the House of Representatives proposes a tax for businesses dumping litter in a landfill. The tax is \$1000 per ton of litter. What is the evidence that the House can do so?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

6. New York and New Jersey are arguing over the border that separates the two states. Lawyers for both states want to settle the matter. What may be done?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

7. Mexico desires a new trade agreement with the United States. Who has the power to negotiate such a treaty? Who must ratify the treaty?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

8. President Bill Smith wants to declare war on Mexico. Can he?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

9. In an effort to reduce the nation's debt, the U.S. government has decided to house male soldiers in houses belonging to married couples with no children. Is this constitutional?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

10. Eighteen year old high school student Jake Stuart goes to the polling place to vote in a local election. The voting registrar in charge of the polling place refuses to hand him a ballot saying that since he is still in high school, he has to be accompanied by a parent to vote. Is this constitutional?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

11. President Jones and Vice President Smith decide to extend their four-year term an extra year due to national security threats (to a total of 5 years). Is this constitutional?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

12. Former presidents Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton were the only presidents in American history to be impeached. Both of them, however, did not lose their jobs as president because they were not convicted. Who presided over their impeachment trials?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

13. Because Texas is such a large state in terms of population, the U.S. Congress decides to give the state an extra senator. Can this be done—is it constitutional?

ANSWER:

ARTICLE & SECTION numbers:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

14. Elizabeth Chen, an American citizen, was refused a ballot at a polling place because she didn't look "American" enough. The officials at the polling place figured that since she was a woman, she probably didn't understand much about politics anyway. On what grounds can this woman sue, claiming her rights were violated?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

15. Will Howard was found not guilty by a jury for robbing a local bank. Howard was released from custody and later interviewed by reporters. He brazenly admitted to the crime and that he got away with it. The police immediately re-arrest him; he is tried again for robbery and, this time, found guilty. Is this constitutional?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

16. The police suspect several students at USC of possessing illegal drugs and firearms. Police have been watching and have targeted a few nameless students. One evening the investigating officers plan a raid, charging into the house late at night taking backpacks and personal belongings to search. Are the officers' actions constitutional?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

17. Juan was accused of stealing his neighbor's bicycle. A trial date has been set for next month, and he was told to get his lawyer. His parents can't afford a lawyer for him. Will he have to appear in court without a lawyer if he can't afford one?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

18. The United States is currently involved in a war in Afghanistan. Due to the high cost of the war and the down turn in the economy, President Obama has urged each family to provided housing for two members of the military. Do U.S. families have to due this?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

19. Since November there has been a huge pothole on San Pedro. Many drivers are hitting it and banging up their cars. People are tired of this so they decide to write to Washington D.C. to ask the federal government to fix it. Is it the job of the federal government to do this?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

20. Los Angeles has decided to sell the basketball court where local students shoot hoops and hang out after school. The students are very unhappy about this decision. They got together and staged a protest by marching with signs that said "Save our B-ball Court!" They were arrested and fined \$50. Is this legal?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

21. Saturday Ashley was walking in the mall stopped in at a clothing store. As she left, Ashley was approached by the stores security guard. He noticed her book bag and began to question her about a dress that was reported stolen. She asked to call her mom, but the security guard said no and continued to question you. Can she refuse to answer the questions?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

22. Due to a rising crime rate and a wave of school shootings, the President of the United States works with Congress to approve a law that makes guns no longer available for sale in America. All firearms are to be destroyed and all gun manufacturers must stop producing weapons. Any citizen that currently owns a gun must turn it over to the government. Are the actions of the president and congress constitutional?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

23. Ulma stole a candy bar from the corner store and was caught and convicted in court. When she is in front of the judge he restates your crime and asked Ulma if she is left or right handed. She says "right" and he sentences her to have her left hand chopped off. Is this acceptable?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

24. You are a Judge presiding over a civil suit in which a person claims their neighbor's kids vandalized his/her car and caused \$3000 dollars in damage. You listen to the homeowner, and you realize that he/she does not want to allow you to rule on this case. You feel the trial will take to long. You tell the homeowner that you refuse to allow this case to go in front of a jury and that you will be presiding over the case yourself? Can you do this?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

25. Since the Right to Privacy is not mentioned in the Constitution, the government can place devices in your home to listen to you and watch you. Is this correct?

ANSWER:

AMENDMENT number:

DIRECT QUOTATION:

