



HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **7th Grade** | Unit 9

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY 709

The Economics and Politics of our State

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Author:

Alpha Omega Staff

Editor:

Alan Christopherson, M.S.

Westover Studios Design Team:

Phillip Pettet, Creative Lead

Teresa Davis, DTP Lead

Nick Castro

Andi Graham

Jerry Wingo



804 N. 2nd Ave. E.

Rock Rapids, IA 51246-1759

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The Economics and Politics of our State

Introduction

We are all citizens of one state or another. Each of the fifty states of the Union has a government. As citizens of those fifty states we should try to understand as much as possible the workings of those state governments. This LIFE PAC® is designed to serve that end. Since all the states are different from one another, only a general coverage is practical here. We can, however, study this material and acquire a better knowledge of the particular state in which we live. Let us prayerfully consider our duties as Christian citizens. Let us seek to learn the facts contained herein so that we may better serve our country and our God.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFE PAC. When you have finished this LIFE PAC, you should be able to:

1. Explain the background of state government.
2. Describe the structure of state government.
3. Discuss the significance of state spending.
4. Enumerate the types and meaning of state taxes.
5. Relate to taxes as a Christian citizen.
6. Explain and evaluate state borrowing.
7. Describe state political parties.
8. Differentiate between liberals and conservatives.
9. Discuss the elements of political power.

Survey the LIFE PAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study and write your questions here.

A large rectangular area with horizontal green lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box. The background of the box is a light gray color.

1. STATE GOVERNMENT

In this section we shall consider the background and structure of state government. By background we mean the history of how states came to be and how they came to have the kind of government we find in the United States

of America. By structure we mean the way in which the various states have set up their governing bodies. This discussion should give us a better understanding of how state government works.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Explain the background of state government.
2. Describe the structure of state government.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

bill (bil). A proposed law presented to a lawmaking body for its approval.

confederacy (kun fed' ur u sē). A union of countries or states.

derive (di rī v'). Obtain from a source; get; receive.

nullification (nul u fu kā ' shun). The act of making null; canceling; voiding.

ratify (rat' u fī). To confirm; approve.

sovereign (sov' run). Independent of the control of another government.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAAC appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are not sure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

Pronunciation Key: hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, īce; hot, ōpen, ōrder; oil; out; cup, pūt, rŭle; child; long; thin; /ʃh/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /u/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil, /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

BACKGROUND

The basic political unit in the United States is the state. The state has a unique function in the American system of government because of the way the nation developed. Remember that thirteen independent colonies united in a relatively loose organization or **confederacy** to fight the British. After victory was secured, the purpose of this union had been served. Each colony was a **sovereign** entity again. They were really thirteen separate countries.

At the end of the war, a very weak government was set up based upon what were called the

Articles of Confederation. This government was basically a continuation of the old Continental Congress that had led the war for independence. The former colonies retained most of their independent character.

The situation was quite awkward. Congress could not collect taxes but had to ask the states for money. The Articles of Confederation were really more of a treaty between sovereign, independent states than of a unified government.



| Independence Hall – Birthplace of the Constitution

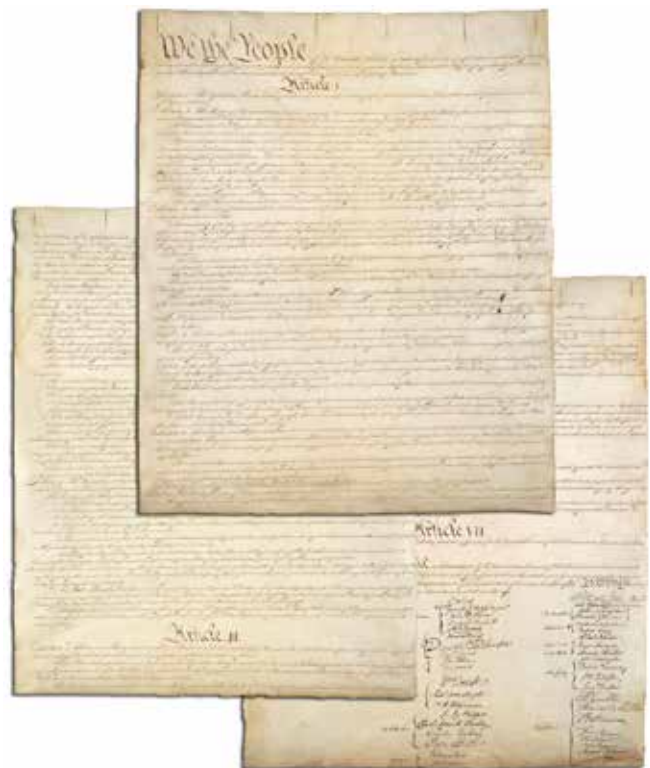
The Constitution was drafted in an effort to strengthen the national government. In fact, the original purpose of what is now called the Constitutional Convention was to revise the Articles, not to draft a new document. The drafting of a new Constitution was a radical departure from the legal purpose of the Convention. That fact is probably one reason that the deliberations were held behind closed doors.

The new *United States Constitution* was signed in 1787 and was completely **ratified** in 1790. The last state to ratify was Rhode Island. It did so on May 29, 1790.

Although the present Constitution greatly expands the power of the federal government, its assumption is that all powers not given to the national government belong to the states or to the people. Federal authority is conceived of as a **derived** authority. The national

government is the United States government. However, its authority and power to exist are derived from the authority already held by the states themselves. The derived nature of federal authority is the reason that state governments look upon themselves as being independent of the national government.

One of the major issues of United States history has been the rightful extent of federal authority and whether the states are allowed to oppose unlawful extensions of federal power. War was declared in 1812 between the United States and England. Most New England federalists opposed the war. Several New England states refused to participate in any way other than by mounting a defense against invasion. The General Assembly of Connecticut in the Connecticut Resolves declared “that the State of Connecticut is a Free, Sovereign, and Independent state; that the United States are a confederacy of States; that we are a confederated and not a consolidated Republic.” The legislators



| The Constitution of the United States

wanted their independence from the national government.

Several New England states also opposed the Embargo Act of 1814, which sought to stop all shipping and other commercial activity in United States waters. The legislatures of these states refused to comply with the federal law. They were using the principle of *interposition*. By this term is meant the use of state sovereignty to block enforcement of a federal law that the state considers unconstitutional. The state interposes its authority over that of the federal government. The principle was first set forth in the Virginia Resolution of 1798:

“That this Assembly doth explicitly and peremptorily declare, that it views the powers of the federal government, as resulting from the compact, to which the states are parties, as limited by the plain sense and intention of the instrument constituting that compact; as no further valid than they are authorized by the grants enunciated in that compact; and that in case of a deliberate, palpable, and dangerous exercise of other powers, not granted by the said compact, the States who are parties thereto, have the right, and are in duty bound, to interpose for arresting the progress of the evil, and for maintaining within their respective limits, the authorities, rights, and liberties appertaining to them.”

Ironically, the author of the Virginia Resolution was James Madison. During his presidency the New England states would invoke the doctrine of interposition against federal measures related to the War of 1812.

An extension of the principle of interposition was **nullification**. This term meant that a state could declare a federal law null and void within its borders. Although the New England states had also used this principle at the time of the War of 1812, nullification was chiefly associated with the views of John C. Calhoun, a senator from South Carolina. He wrote:

“The right of interposition, thus solemnly asserted by the state of Virginia, be it called what it may—State-right, veto, nullification, or by any other name—I conceive to be the fundamental principle of our system, resting on facts historically as certain as our revolution itself, and deductions as simple and demonstrative as that of any political or moral truth whatever; and I firmly believe that on its recognition depend the stability and safety of our political institutions...”

Eventually, Southerners who believed as Calhoun did would accept the doctrine of *secession* which said that a state had the right to leave the Union if it thought that the Union had violated its rights. Others disagreed, saying no state could disobey a federal law, much less break the Union. The issue was settled in blood. The Civil War was won by the Union and the door was closed to secession. This war created no legal solution to the problem; the question was simply eliminated by force.

However, the issue of state sovereignty remains, even though no one talks of secession. How sovereign are the states? What is the legitimate extent of federal authority? The question is now largely left to the courts, which consider each issue separately. The trend has been a diminishing of state sovereignty and an increase in federal power.

This increase in federal power at the expense of the state does not mean that state sovereignty does not exist today. State governments are still pursuing their own courses. They do not consult with Washington concerning actions. States' rights, though diminished, are still with us and play a large role in shaping the character of the United States system.

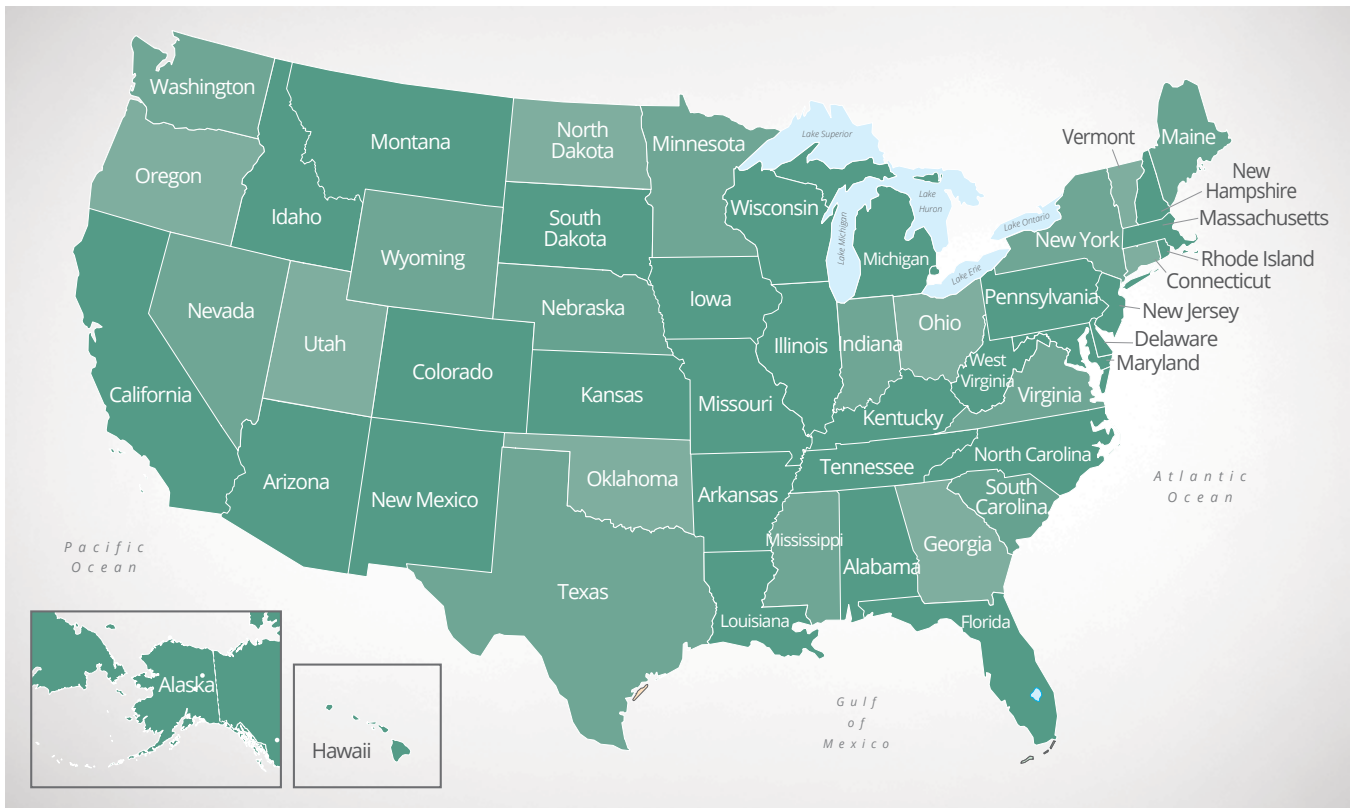
One cannot understand either state government or federal government without a basic comprehension of the original sovereignty of the state governments and the derived sovereignty of the national government. This system of government is unique to the United States.

The term *state* can mean several things. It may refer to general conditions in a certain context: for example, “the state of the weather” or “the state of the roads.” It may be used as a synonym for government or the body politic. Some will speak of the growth of state power or the extension of the state into every area of life; in these cases, what is meant is the government in general.

For the purposes of this LIFEPAAC, the term *state* refers to the basic units of United States government. A state is roughly similar to the provinces that compose some other countries, but

it differs from them because of the historical background we have just discussed. The United States is composed of fifty states. The reason that the state is referred to as the basic unit of government is twofold. First, the United States government derives its authority from the states. This assumption implies that the states have a built-in sovereignty. Second, the state government is the creator of all other levels of government. It is, therefore, the central unit.

The following map is a map of the fifty states. Can you find your state? What is the name of your state? What states border your state?



| The United States of America



Match the following terms.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1.1 _____ bill | a. obtain from a source; get; receive |
| 1.2 _____ confederacy | b. a union of countries or states |
| 1.3 _____ derive | c. independent of the control of another government |
| 1.4 _____ nullification | d. the act of making null; canceling; voiding |
| 1.5 _____ ratify | e. to confirm; approve |
| 1.6 _____ sovereign | f. a proposed law presented to a lawmaking body for its approval |

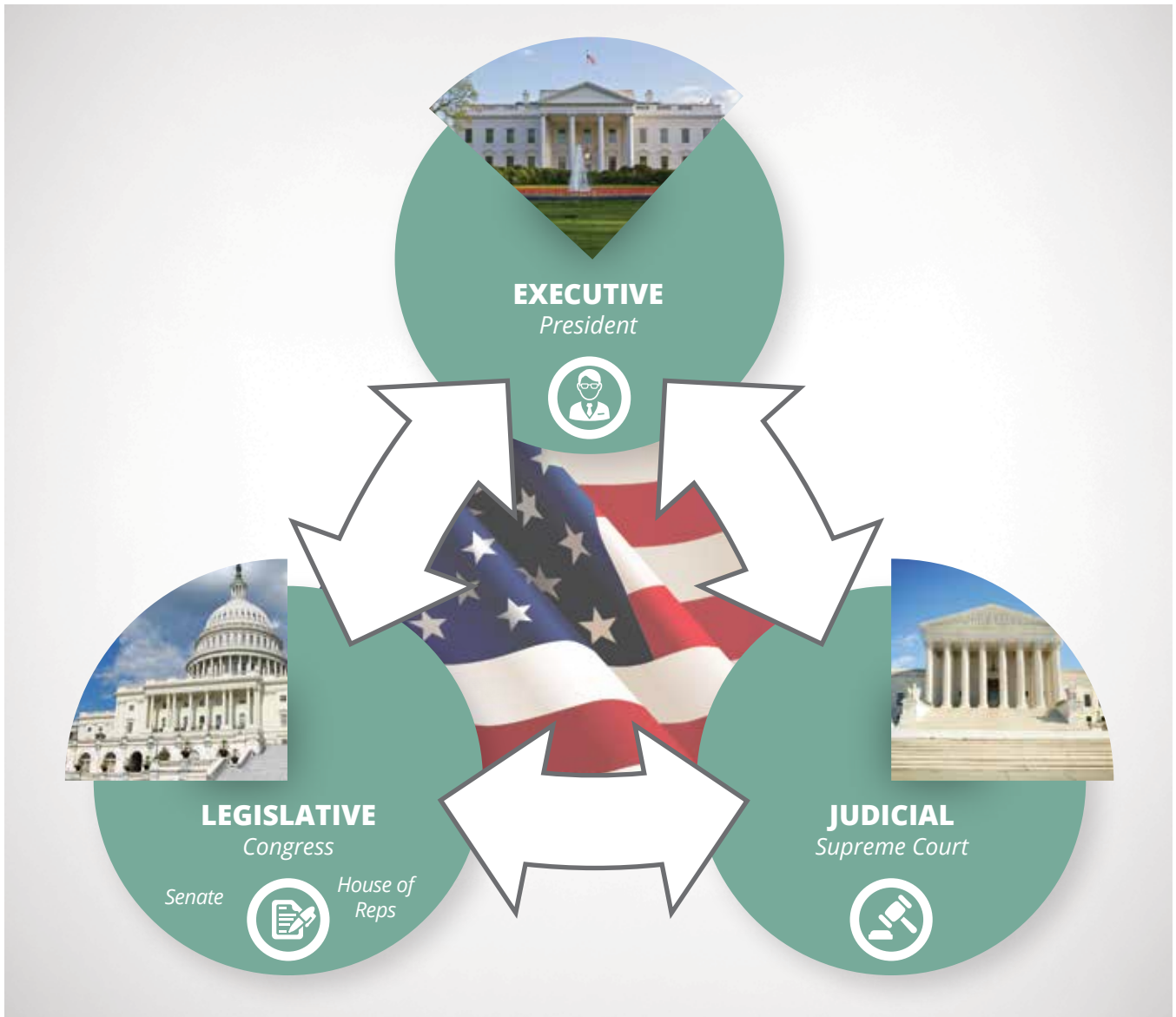
Write the letter of the correct answer on the line.

- 1.7 The basic political unit in America is the _____ .
 a. federal government b. democracy
 c. county d. state
- 1.8 How many independent colonies did the United States originally have when they banded together to fight the British? _____
 a. fifty b. thirteen c. five d. sixteen
- 1.9 The Articles of Confederation were basically a continuation of the _____ .
 a. revolutionary army b. Continental Congress
 c. English Parliament
- 1.10 Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress could not collect its own _____ .
 a. taxes b. laws c. statutes d. amendments
- 1.11 Rather than a government, the Articles were more like a _____ .
 a. club b. state c. treaty d. right-to work law
- 1.12 The Constitution was drafted in an effort to strengthen the _____ .
 a. state government b. national government
 c. regional government d. county government
- 1.13 The original purpose of the Constitutional Convention was to _____ .
 a. revise the Articles of Confederation b. write a new Constitution
 c. elect a president d. none of the above
- 1.14 The Constitution was signed in _____ .
 a. 1885 b. 1776 c. 1787 d. 1607
- 1.15 The Constitution assumes that all powers not specifically granted to the _____ national government are retained by the people or the _____ .
 a. Congress b. counties c. states d. Supreme Court

- 1.16 Federal authority is _____.
 - a. sovereign authority
 - b. derived authority
 - c. complete authority
 - d. weak authority
- 1.17 American state governments possess a sovereignty _____.
 - a. independent of the federal government
 - b. inferior to the federal government
 - c. equal to that of the federal government
- 1.18 In which war did some of the New England states refused to participate _____ in any way other than mounting a defense against invasion? _____.
 - a. the American Revolution
 - b. the Civil War
 - c. World War II
 - d. the War of 1812
- 1.19 "The use of state sovereignty to block enforcement of a federal law that the state considers unconstitutional" is the definition of _____.
 - a. veto
 - b. interposition
 - c. secession
 - d. entreaty
- 1.20 The doctrine of interposition was first enunciated in the _____.
 - a. Connecticut Resolves of 1798
 - b. Texas Observer of 1798
 - c. Virginia Resolution of 1798
- 1.21 The doctrine of nullification was associated with _____.
 - a. Calvin
 - b. Knox
 - c. Wesley
 - d. Calhoun
- 1.22 The option of a state's seceding from the Union was closed by the _____.
 - a. apostolic succession
 - b. Civil war
 - c. Emancipation Proclamation
- 1.23 Has the sovereignty of the states increased? _____.
 - a. yes
 - b. no

Complete these activities.

- 1.24 The number of states in the United States is _____.
- 1.25 Name two reasons that the state is called the basic unit of our government.
 - a. _____
 - _____
 - b. _____
 - _____



STRUCTURE

State government, like the federal government, is divided into three branches: the *legislative*, the *executive*, and the *judicial*. These three branches are designed to provide checks and balances upon one another. The men who founded the United States system of government were very wise. They agreed with Lord Acton, “All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Their object was to limit the power of any one person or institution.

The leaders of the original thirteen states borrowed many ideas from Montesquieu, a French philosopher who recommended the system of checks and balances in his *Spirit of the Laws*. This book was widely read in colonial times—especially by men such as Adams, Jefferson, and Madison.

Legislative. Most state legislatures in the United States are divided into two houses, normally called the House of Representatives and the Senate. Such a legislature with two houses

is termed *bicameral*. The state of Nebraska has a one-house legislature. It is termed *unicameral*. The lawmaking body is not always termed the state legislature. It can also be called the general assembly (as it is in nine states), the legislative assembly (in three states), or the general court (in two states).

The state House of Representatives is presided over by the *Speaker of the House*. He is normally elected by the members at the beginning of each session. Houses of Representatives vary in size from up to four hundred members to as few as thirty-five. The average state House of Representatives, however, has about one hundred members. These members are chosen from throughout the state on the basis of population.

One problem traditionally has been that some state legislatures do not have equal representation. Usually the rural population has been over-represented, and the urban population has been under-represented. This condition reflects the fact that we were once a predominantly agricultural country. Recent actions by

the United States Supreme Court are tending to correct these imbalances so that both city citizens and suburban citizens are more equally represented.

Another trend is to *single-member* districts. In some states some counties or legislative districts have been represented by *at-large* members. At-large representatives are elected by all the voters in the area. The result can be that a group of voters (such as suburbanites) dominate the election, and poorer areas are often under-represented. To counteract this tendency, districts have been divided into smaller geographical units. As a result, more people from minority groups now serve in state legislatures.

The *Speaker of the House* often wields a tremendous amount of authority. He is often able to appoint committee chairmen and to control what legislation will be considered. Of course, the speaker also decides who may speak out on the legislature floor.

Not all state legislatures are divided into two parties. Some states (such as Nebraska) do



GOVERNMENTS of STATES

STATE VOTERS ELECT

GOVERNOR

- Treasurer
- Secretary of State
- Auditor
- Attorney General
- Superintendent of Education
- Director of Public Health

SENATORS REPRESENTATIVES

JUDGES

In Most States—Some Appointed by Governor or Legislature

- 1 State Supreme Court
- 2 Higher State Trial Courts
- 3 State Trial Courts
- 4 Lower State Courts



Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test. The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.

SELF TEST 1

Complete these sentences (each answer, 3 points).

- 1.01 The basic political unit in the United States is the _____ .
- 1.02 The Articles of Confederation were more of a _____ than a government.
- 1.03 The a. _____ was part of an effort to
b. _____ the government under the Articles of Confederation.
- 1.04 The original purpose of the Constitutional Convention was to _____ the Articles.
- 1.05 Federal authority is _____ authority.
- 1.06 State governments possess a sovereignty _____ of the federal government.
- 1.07 The War of 1812 was opposed by several _____ states.
- 1.08 The doctrine of _____ means *the use of state sovereignty to block a federal law*.
- 1.09 Secession was no longer a choice for the states after the _____ .
- 1.010 The executive, the legislative, and the _____ are the three main divisions of state government.
- 1.011 In the executive branch of a state, the most important official is the _____ .
- 1.012 The state supreme court is part of the _____ branch.
- 1.013 Lord Acton wrote, "All _____ tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."
- 1.014 The political thoughts of _____ provided theoretical justification for the United States system of checks and balances.
- 1.015 A legislature that has only one body is a _____ legislature.

Match the following (each answer, 2 points).

- 1.029 _____ bicameral
- 1.030 _____ conservative
- 1.031 _____ checks and balances
- 1.032 _____ biennial
- 1.033 _____ House of Representatives
- 1.034 _____ speaker of the house
- 1.035 _____ liberal
- 1.036 _____ governor
- 1.037 _____ attorney general
- 1.038 _____ state archives

- a. supports less government and balanced budgets
- b. occurs every two years
- c. controls the state police
- d. place where state documents are kept
- e. keep one branch of government from becoming too powerful
- f. a state's lawyer
- g. legislature with two houses
- h. domination of an election by a group of voters
- i. controls legislation and decides who may speak on the legislative floor
- j. usually has about 100 members in most states
- k. tend to favor more government

65 81	SCORE _____	TEACHER _____	initials	date
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804 N. 2nd Ave. E.
Rock Rapids, IA 51246-1759

800-622-3070
www.aop.com