

**1. The president CANNOT issue a pardon in the case of**

- (A) persons related to the president.
- (B) officials who serve the president.
- (C) persons convicted of treason.
- (D) impeached government officials.

**2. When can the vice president vote in the Senate?**

- (A) Always
- (B) Never
- (C) When a vote is tied
- (D) When a senator is absent

**3. What does the term *capture* refer to in regards to federal regulatory agencies?**

- (A) The loss of efficiency due to increasing bureaucratic rules and red tape
- (B) The tendency of agencies to serve the interests of the industries they regulate
- (C) The president's ability to appoint individuals to lead regulatory agencies
- (D) The difficulty of effectively overseeing very large regulatory agencies

**4. What is the BEST description of the power or powers of regulatory agencies?**

- (A) Executive power only
- (B) Executive and legislative powers
- (C) Executive, legislative, and judicial powers
- (D) Executive and judicial powers

**5. One way government corporations differ from private corporations is that government corporations**

- (A) are barred from earning profits.
- (B) lack a board of directors.
- (C) receive no federal funding.
- (D) lack any stockholders.

**6. The merit system in government includes the practice of**

- (A) hiring on the basis of exam results.
- (B) hiring on the basis of campaign work.
- (C) rewarding departments for swift action.
- (D) rewarding departments for wise spending.

**7. Which of the following is one way Congress might limit the power of the bureaucracy?**

- (A) Dismiss civil servants
- (B) Use the Office of Management and Budget
- (C) Enact a sunset law
- (D) Use the National Security Council

**8. Which is the BEST description of whistle blowing?**

- (A) Conducting a congressional investigation
- (B) Prosecuting governmental wrongdoing
- (C) Reporting bureaucratic mismanagement
- (D) Stopping funding for inefficient programs

**9. Which is the BEST description of the relationship between the bureaucracy and the three branches of the national government?**

- (A) The bureaucracy implements presidential policy only.
- (B) The bureaucracy implements legislative policy only.
- (C) The bureaucracy implements presidential and judicial policy.
- (D) The bureaucracy implements policies/rulings of all three branches.

**10. An independent executive agency**

- (A) is a member of the Cabinet.
- (B) reports directly to the president.
- (C) is run by a board of directors.
- (D) receives no congressional funding.

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**CLEP American Government Practice Question Answer Key**

1. The correct answer is D. The president cannot issue a pardon in the case of impeachment. However, the president has the authority to issue pardons in each of the other cases described by the other options. The president also has the authority to commute a sentence (lighten a convicted person's sentence). In addition, the president can offer reprieves, delaying the time when a convicted person's sentence is carried out. Sometimes presidential pardons have been controversial; for example, President Ford pardoned President Nixon for his involvement with the Watergate scandal, even before Nixon had been charged with any crime.
2. The correct answer is C. The Constitution gives the vice president little formal power (although the vice president becomes president if the president dies). However, the vice president formally presides over the Senate and can vote in the Senate if a vote is tied; so the vice president serves as a tiebreaker. This does not occur very often. Option C is the only option that correctly answers the question; the vice president cannot vote in the senate just because a senator is absent, for example, so option D can be rejected.

3. The correct answer is B. Capture refers to the tendency of regulatory agencies (for example, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency) to serve the interests of the industries they regulate, rather than providing objective oversight to serve public interests. One reason this might happen is because leaders in those industries provide information and advice to regulatory agencies, and sometimes that advice might be in the interests of the industry, not necessarily in the interests of the public; so, in following that advice, regulatory agencies serve the industries rather than the public. Regarding option C, the president does appoint individuals to lead and serve in regulatory agencies, but this is not what capture refers to.
4. The correct answer is C. Regulatory agencies have executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Regulatory agencies are given the power to regulate certain economic activities. Within an agency's field, an agency has the power to make rules (legislative power) and carry them out (executive powers). They also have the power to resolve disputes that arise concerning those rules (judicial powers). Regulatory agencies, then, are powerful agencies. Some are more independent of the president, and some are less so, depending in part on whether agency members can be dismissed at will by the president or serve a fixed term once appointed.
5. The correct answer is D. Government corporations share important similarities with private corporations. Government corporations (such as the United States Postal Service and Amtrak) can earn profits (nothing legally prevents them from doing so); this eliminates option A. Profits earned by government corporations are not taxed. They are overseen by a board of directors, like private corporations; this eliminates option B. In government corporations, the president appoints directors. They do receive federal funding; this eliminates option C. However, unlike private corporations, there are no stockholders in government corporations (one cannot buy shares in the United States Postal Service, for example).
6. The correct answer is A. According to the merit system in the civil service - service to the government -, individuals are hired, promoted, and fired at least in part on the basis of their performance on competitive examinations. This is meant to ensure that such individuals are competent and qualified, rather than acquiring government positions simply because they have personal connections or through political reasons. It is also meant to prevent corruption. It can be very difficult to fire a career civil servant. Because the merit system applies only to individuals - not entire departments - options C and D can be eliminated. Option B can be eliminated because according to the merit system, civil servants are not hired, promoted, or fired on the basis of work they did during political campaigns.
7. The correct answer is C. A sunset law is a law that will expire within a specified time period unless the law is re-authorized by Congress. This means that it is not up to the bureaucracy to decide whether a program under the law is worth carrying out; it is up to Congress. Congress does not often enact sunset laws. Congress does not have the power to dismiss civil servants; this eliminates option A. The Office of Management and Budget is under the president, not Congress; this eliminates option B. Similarly, the National Security Council is under the president, not Congress; this eliminates option D.
8. The correct answer is C. A whistleblower reports extreme mismanagement (or illegal behavior) by the government. Whistleblowers enjoy certain protections by law. For instance, the Office of Special Counsel (created by the Whistle-Blower Protection Act of 1989) investigates cases in which government employees complain that they have suffered

retaliation at work in response to reporting mismanagement or legal wrongdoing. However, there are still relatively few whistleblowers. The other options are related in some way to whistle blowing (for instance, Congress might stop funding or conduct an investigation in response to what a whistleblower says), but they do not accurately describe whistle blowing itself.

9. The correct answer is D. The primary function of the bureaucracy is to put policy into place. It implements the policies of both the executive and legislative branches and sometimes rulings by the judicial branch as well. Sometimes there is tension between the policies of one branch and the policies of another branch (for instance, as when the political party of the president is the minority party in Congress rather than the majority power). Congress, the president, and the judiciary can each put a check on the power of the bureaucracies (in different ways), though the bureaucracy remains powerful. Option D is the only answer that correctly describes the relationship between the bureaucracy and the three branches of the federal government.
10. The correct answer is B. Independent executive agencies report directly to the president. However, they are not members of the president's cabinet; this eliminates option A. In addition, they are not run by a board of directors (as a government corporation is); this eliminates option C. Rather, they are run by an agency head that is appointed by the president. Independent executive agencies, like other agencies in the government, receive funding from the government, funding controlled by Congress (this is one way Congress exercises power over the bureaucracy). This eliminates option D.