U.S. History

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Who took the first U.S. presidential oath in New York City in 1789?
   - A. George Washington
   - B. John Adams
   - C. Thomas Jefferson
   - D. James Madison

   Correct answer: A. George Washington
   Washington took the oath at Federal Hall. New York City was the temporary national capital.

2. Which country sold the Louisiana territory to the United States in 1803?
   - A. Great Britain
   - B. Spain
   - C. France
   - D. The Netherlands

   Correct answer: C. France
   The United States agreed to buy the territory from France. The purchase nearly doubled the size of the country.

3. Which federal research organization provided the core staff and laboratories for NASA when it opened in 1958?
   - A. National Science Foundation
   - B. National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics
   - C. United States Geological Survey
   - D. Civil Aeronautics Board

   Correct answer: B. National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics
   NASA incorporated the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and its research facilities when operations started in October 1958.

4. The 19th Amendment bars the federal government and states from denying a citizen the vote on which ground?
   - A. Race
   - B. Failure to pay a poll tax
   - C. Being younger than 21
   - D. Sex

   Correct answer: D. Sex
   The 19th Amendment prohibits denying or abridging a citizen's voting rights on account of sex. Other barriers to voting persisted.

5. Which Supreme Court case held that state-mandated racial segregation in public schools violated equal protection?

A. Plessy v. Ferguson
B. Brown v. Board of Education
C. Marbury v. Madison
D. Miranda v. Arizona

Correct answer: B. Brown v. Board of Education
The Court held in Brown that separate public educational facilities were inherently unequal under the 14th Amendment.

6. A museum case displays the Treaty of Ghent. Which conflict should its label say the treaty ended?

A. The War of 1812
B. The American Revolution
C. The Mexican-American War
D. The Spanish-American War

Correct answer: A. The War of 1812
The United States and Great Britain signed the treaty in December 1814. Its peace terms called for the return of territory captured during the war.

7. Which federal law most directly explains an 1860s application for a 160-acre tract with a five-year residence requirement?

A. The Pendleton Act
B. The Morrill Act
C. The Pacific Railway Act
D. The Homestead Act

Correct answer: D. The Homestead Act
The Homestead Act let eligible applicants claim public land. A standard route to title required five years of residence and evidence that the land had been improved.

8. An 1882 immigration record refers to a ten-year suspension. Whose entry did the Chinese Exclusion Act specifically suspend?

A. Chinese diplomats
B. All immigrants from East Asia
C. Chinese laborers
D. Chinese merchants as a class

Correct answer: C. Chinese laborers
The act targeted Chinese laborers. Its text treated qualifying entrants such as merchants differently from laborers.

9. Which change did the original Social Security Act use to address old-age financial insecurity?

A. A federal system of old-age benefits for eligible workers
B. Free medical coverage for every person over 65
C. Savings accounts for all federal employees
D. Mortgage guarantees for returning veterans

Correct answer: A. A federal system of old-age benefits for eligible workers
The 1935 law established federal old-age benefits for eligible workers. Its original coverage excluded many kinds of employment.

10. What did Executive Order 9066 authorize that made wartime removal and incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry possible?

A. A congressional ban on immigration from all Pacific countries
B. A new constitutional rule on citizenship by birth
C. Federal limits on where military veterans could study
D. Military areas from which people could be excluded

Correct answer: D. Military areas from which people could be excluded
The order authorized military commanders to designate areas and exclude people from them. Officials used that power to remove people of Japanese ancestry, including U.S. citizens.

11. A veteran returning from World War II wants help paying for school. Which law was designed to provide that kind of benefit?

A. The Pendleton Act
B. The Social Security Act
C. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act
D. The Voting Rights Act

Correct answer: C. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act
The 1944 law, commonly called the GI Bill, provided education and training benefits for eligible veterans along with other forms of assistance.

12. Which policy connects federal land grants to college instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts?

A. Railroad companies had to run colleges on their rights-of-way
B. States could use proceeds from granted land to support colleges
C. Settlers had to open colleges on their homesteads
D. Federal agencies had to train applicants on public land

Correct answer: B. States could use proceeds from granted land to support colleges
The Morrill Act gave states land or land scrip. The resulting proceeds helped fund colleges with a practical instructional mission.

13. Which piece of evidence best illustrates the kind of discriminatory voting barrier that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 targeted?

A. A zoning rule governing where a railway depot could be built
B. Separate public schools assigned by race
C. A federal hiring exam for a civil service position
D. A literacy test used in a covered jurisdiction to screen voter applicants

Correct answer: D. A literacy test used in a covered jurisdiction to screen voter applicants
The law suspended tests and devices such as literacy tests in covered jurisdictions and created tools to enforce the right to vote.

14. A surveyor tracks miles completed by two companies building the transcontinental railroad. Why did that mileage matter under the Pacific Railway Act?

A. It helped determine federal bonds and land aid for construction
B. It set the amount states could collect in tariffs
C. It triggered the transfer of track ownership to the states
D. It determined how many veterans received homesteads

Correct answer: A. It helped determine federal bonds and land aid for construction
Federal bonds were issued as sections of the line were completed, and the Act specified land grants per mile. Both helped finance the railroad and telegraph line.

15. A federal clerkship covered by the Pendleton Act is vacant. One applicant has a party leader's endorsement. Another qualifies through an open examination. Which rule reflects the reform?

A. Let the departing clerk name a successor
B. Refer the decision to the party organization
C. Consider candidates through the competitive exam process
D. Give officials of each state a turn to select the clerk

Correct answer: C. Consider candidates through the competitive exam process
The Pendleton Act brought competitive examinations into parts of the federal civil service and limited political patronage for covered positions.