

Test Information
Guide:
College-Level
Examination
Program[®]

2015-16

American
Government

CLEP TEST INFORMATION GUIDE FOR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

History of CLEP

Since 1967, the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP®) has provided over six million people with the opportunity to reach their educational goals. CLEP participants have received college credit for knowledge and expertise they have gained through prior course work, independent study or work and life experience.

Over the years, the CLEP examinations have evolved to keep pace with changing curricula and pedagogy. Typically, the examinations represent material taught in introductory college-level courses from all areas of the college curriculum. Students may choose from 33 different subject areas in which to demonstrate their mastery of college-level material.

Today, more than 2,900 colleges and universities recognize and grant credit for CLEP.

Philosophy of CLEP

Promoting access to higher education is CLEP's foundation. CLEP offers students an opportunity to demonstrate and receive validation of their college-level skills and knowledge. Students who achieve an appropriate score on a CLEP exam can enrich their college experience with higher-level courses in their major field of study, expand their horizons by taking a wider array of electives and avoid repetition of material that they already know.

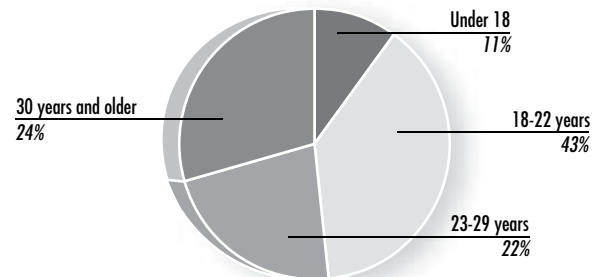
CLEP Participants

CLEP's test-taking population includes people of all ages and walks of life. Traditional 18- to 22-year-old students, adults just entering or returning to school, high-school students, home-schoolers and international students who need to quantify their knowledge have all been assisted by CLEP in earning their college degrees. Currently, 59 percent of CLEP's National (civilian) test-takers are women and 46 percent are 23 years of age or older.

For over 30 years, the College Board has worked to provide government-funded credit-by-exam opportunities to the military through CLEP. Military service members are fully funded for their CLEP exam fees. Exams are administered at military installations

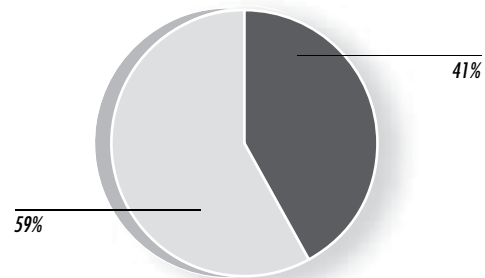
worldwide through computer-based testing programs. Approximately one-third of all CLEP candidates are military service members.

2014-15 National CLEP Candidates by Age*



* These data are based on 100% of CLEP test-takers who responded to this survey question during their examinations.

2014-15 National CLEP Candidates by Gender



Computer-Based CLEP Testing

The computer-based format of CLEP exams allows for a number of key features. These include:

- a variety of question formats that ensure effective assessment
- real-time score reporting that gives students and colleges the ability to make immediate credit-granting decisions (except College Composition, which requires faculty scoring of essays twice a month)
- a uniform recommended credit-granting score of 50 for all exams
- “rights-only” scoring, which awards one point per correct answer
- pretest questions that are not scored but provide current candidate population data and allow for rapid expansion of question pools

CLEP Exam Development

Content development for each of the CLEP exams is directed by a test development committee. Each committee is composed of faculty from a wide variety of institutions who are currently teaching the relevant college undergraduate courses. The committee members establish the test specifications based on feedback from a national curriculum survey; recommend credit-granting scores and standards; develop and select test questions; review statistical data and prepare descriptive material for use by faculty (*Test Information Guides*) and students planning to take the tests (*CLEP Official Study Guide*).

College faculty also participate in CLEP in other ways: they convene periodically as part of standard-setting panels to determine the recommended level of student competency for the granting of college credit; they are called upon to write exam questions and to review exam forms; and they help to ensure the continuing relevance of the CLEP examinations through the curriculum surveys.

The Curriculum Survey

The first step in the construction of a CLEP exam is a curriculum survey. Its main purpose is to obtain information needed to develop test-content specifications that reflect the current college curriculum and to recognize anticipated changes in the field. The surveys of college faculty are conducted in each subject every few years depending on the discipline. Specifically, the survey gathers information on:

- the major content and skill areas covered in the equivalent course and the proportion of the course devoted to each area
- specific topics taught and the emphasis given to each topic
- specific skills students are expected to acquire and the relative emphasis given to them
- recent and anticipated changes in course content, skills and topics
- the primary textbooks and supplementary learning resources used
- titles and lengths of college courses that correspond to the CLEP exam

The Committee

The College Board appoints standing committees of college faculty for each test title in the CLEP battery. Committee members usually serve a term of up to four years. Each committee works with content specialists at Educational Testing Service to establish test specifications and develop the tests. Listed below are the current committee members and their institutional affiliations.

Rorie Spill Solberg, Oregon State University
Chair

Scott Meinke Bucknell University

Elizabeth Vonnahme University of Missouri —
Kansas City

The primary objective of the committee is to produce tests with good content validity. CLEP tests must be rigorous and relevant to the discipline and the appropriate courses. While the consensus of the committee members is that this test has high content validity for a typical introductory American Government course or curriculum, the validity of the content for a specific course or curriculum is best determined locally through careful review and comparison of test content, with instructional content covered in a particular course or curriculum.

The Committee Meeting

The exam is developed from a pool of questions written by committee members and outside question writers. All questions that will be scored on a CLEP exam have been pretested; those that pass a rigorous statistical analysis for content relevance, difficulty, fairness and correlation with assessment criteria are added to the pool. These questions are compiled by test development specialists according to the test specifications, and are presented to all the committee members for a final review. Before convening at a two- or three-day committee meeting, the members have a chance to review the test specifications and the pool of questions available for possible inclusion in the exam.

At the meeting, the committee determines whether the questions are appropriate for the test and, if not, whether they need to be reworked and pretested again to ensure that they are accurate and unambiguous. Finally, draft forms of the exam are reviewed to ensure comparable levels of difficulty and content specifications on the various test forms. The committee is also responsible for writing and developing pretest questions. These questions are administered to candidates who take the examination and provide valuable statistical feedback on student performance under operational conditions.

Once the questions are developed and pretested, tests are assembled in one of two ways. In some cases, test forms are assembled in their entirety. These forms are of comparable difficulty and are therefore interchangeable. More commonly, questions are assembled into smaller, content-specific units called testlets, which can then be combined in different ways to create multiple test forms. This method allows many different forms to be assembled from a pool of questions.

Test Specifications

Test content specifications are determined primarily through the curriculum survey, the expertise of the committee and test development specialists, the recommendations of appropriate councils and conferences, textbook reviews and other appropriate sources of information. Content specifications take into account:

- the purpose of the test
- the intended test-taker population
- the titles and descriptions of courses the test is designed to reflect
- the specific subject matter and abilities to be tested
- the length of the test, types of questions and instructions to be used

Recommendation of the American Council on Education (ACE)

The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (ACE CREDIT) has evaluated CLEP processes and procedures for developing, administering and scoring the exams. Effective July 2001, ACE recommended a uniform credit-granting score of 50 across all subjects (with additional Level-2 recommendations for the world language examinations), representing the performance of students who earn a grade of C in the corresponding course. Every test title has a minimum score of **20**, a maximum score of **80** and a cut score of **50**. However, these score values cannot be compared across exams. The score scale is set so that a score of **50** represents the performance expected of a typical C student, which may differ from one subject to another. The score scale is not based on actual performance of test-takers. It is derived from the judgment of a panel of experts (college faculty who teach the course) who provide information on the level of student performance that would be necessary to receive college credit in the course.

Over the years, the CLEP examinations have been adapted to adjust to changes in curricula and pedagogy. As academic disciplines evolve, college faculty incorporate new methods and theory into their courses. CLEP examinations are revised to reflect those changes so the examinations continue to meet the needs of colleges and students. The CLEP program's most recent ACE CREDIT review was held in June 2015.

The American Council on Education, the major coordinating body for all the nation's higher education institutions, seeks to provide leadership and a unifying voice on key higher education issues and to influence public policy through advocacy, research and program initiatives. For more information, visit the ACE CREDIT website at www.acenet.edu/acecredit.

CLEP Credit Granting

CLEP uses a common recommended credit-granting score of 50 for all CLEP exams.

This common credit-granting score does not mean, however, that the standards for all CLEP exams are the same. When a new or revised version of a test is introduced, the program conducts a standard setting to determine the recommended credit-granting score (“cut score”).

A standard-setting panel, consisting of 15–20 faculty members from colleges and universities across the country who are currently teaching the course, is appointed to give its expert judgment on the level of student performance that would be necessary to receive college credit in the course. The panel reviews the test and test specifications and defines

the capabilities of the typical A student, as well as those of the typical B, C and D students.* Expected individual student performance is rated by each panelist on each question. The combined average of the ratings is used to determine a recommended number of examination questions that must be answered correctly to mirror classroom performance of typical B and C students in the related course. The panel’s findings are given to members of the test development committee who, with the help of Educational Testing Service and College Board psychometric specialists, make a final determination on which raw scores are equivalent to B and C levels of performance.

*Student performance for the language exams (French, German and Spanish) is defined only at the B and C levels.

American Government

Description of the Examination

The American Government examination covers material that is usually taught in a one-semester introductory course in American government and politics at the college level. The scope and emphasis of the exam reflect what is most commonly taught in introductory American government and politics courses in political science departments around the United States. These courses go beyond a general understanding of civics to incorporate political processes and behavior. The exam covers topics such as the institutions and policy processes of the federal government, the federal courts and civil liberties, political parties and interest groups, political beliefs and behavior, and the content and history of the Constitution.

The examination contains approximately 100 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored. Any time candidates spend on tutorials and providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time.

Knowledge and Skills Required

Questions on the American Government examination require candidates to demonstrate one or more of the following abilities in the approximate proportions indicated.

- Knowledge of American government and politics (about 55%–60% of the exam)
- Understanding of typical patterns of political processes and behavior (including the components of the behavioral situation of a political actor), and the principles used to explain or justify various governmental structures and procedures (about 30%–35% of the exam)
- Analysis and interpretation of simple data that are relevant to American government and politics (10%–15% of the exam)

The subject matter of the American Government examination is drawn from the following topics. The percentages next to the main topics indicate the approximate percentage of exam questions on that topic.

30%–35% Institutions and Policy Processes: Presidency, Bureaucracy and Congress

- The major formal and informal institutional arrangements and powers
- Structure, policy processes and outputs
- Relationships among these three institutions and links between them and political parties, interest groups, the media and public opinion

15%–20% Federal Courts, Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

- Structure and processes of the judicial system, with emphasis on the role and influence of the Supreme Court
- The development of civil rights and civil liberties by judicial interpretation
- The Bill of Rights
- Incorporation of the Bill of Rights
- Equal protection and due process

15%–20% Political Parties and Interest Groups

- Political parties (including their function, organization, mobilization, historical development and effects on the political process)
- Interest groups (including the variety of activities they typically undertake and their effects on the political process)
- Elections (including the electoral process)

10%–15% Political Beliefs and Behavior

- Processes by which citizens learn about politics
- Political participation (including voting behavior)
- Public opinion
- Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders
- Political culture (the variety of factors that predispose citizens to differ from one another in terms of their political perceptions, values, attitudes and activities)
- The influence of public opinion on political leaders

15%–20% Constitutional Underpinnings of American Democracy

The development of concepts such as

- Federalism (with attention to intergovernmental relations)
- Separation of powers
- Checks and balances
- Majority rule
- Minority rights
- Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution
- Theories of democracy

Sample Test Questions

The following sample questions do not appear on an actual CLEP examination. They are intended to give potential test-takers an indication of the format and difficulty level of the examination and to provide content for practice and review. Knowing the correct answers to all of the sample questions is not a guarantee of satisfactory performance on the exam.

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. Which of the following statements best reflects the pluralist theory of American politics?
 - (A) American politics is dominated by a small elite.
 - (B) Public policies emerge from cooperation among elites in business, labor, and government.
 - (C) Public policies emerge from compromises reached among competing groups.
 - (D) American politics is dominated by cities at the expense of rural areas.
 - (E) The American political arena is made up of isolated individuals who have few group affiliations outside the family.

2. Which of the following is generally the most significant influence on an individual's identification with a particular political party?
 - (A) Religious affiliation
 - (B) Family
 - (C) Level of education
 - (D) Television
 - (E) The party identification of the incumbent president

3. Which of the following committee assignments would confer the most power and influence on members of the House of Representatives?
 - (A) Agriculture
 - (B) Ways and Means
 - (C) Veterans' Affairs
 - (D) Armed Services
 - (E) Education and Labor

4. Which of the following statements about *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* is correct?
 - (A) It declared segregation by race in the public schools unconstitutional.
 - (B) It established the principle of one person, one vote.
 - (C) It required that citizens about to be arrested be read a statement concerning their right to remain silent.
 - (D) It declared Bible reading in the public schools unconstitutional.
 - (E) It declared segregation by race in places of public accommodation unconstitutional.

5. Prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, literacy tests were used by some southern states to
 - (A) determine the educational achievement of potential voters
 - (B) prevent African Americans from exercising their right to vote
 - (C) assess the general population's understanding of the Constitution
 - (D) hinder the migration of northerners
 - (E) defend the practice of segregation

6. The practice whereby individual senators can veto federal judicial nominations in their respective states is called
- (A) logrolling
 - (B) preferential treatment
 - (C) senatorial prerogative
 - (D) senatorial courtesy
 - (E) judicial selection
7. Differences between House and Senate versions of a bill are resolved
- (A) in a conference committee
 - (B) by the Rules committees of both chambers
 - (C) in subcommittee hearings
 - (D) by the president before the bill is signed into law
 - (E) during the bill's markup phase
8. Which of the following principles protects a citizen from imprisonment without trial?
- (A) Representative government
 - (B) Separation of powers
 - (C) Due process
 - (D) Checks and balances
 - (E) Popular sovereignty
9. The passage of legislation in Congress often depends on mutual accommodations among members. This suggests that, to some extent, congressional behavior is based on
- (A) ideological divisions
 - (B) partisan division
 - (C) the principle of reciprocity
 - (D) deference to state legislatures
 - (E) norms of seniority
10. Which of the following statements accurately describes the president's veto power?
- I. A president sometimes threatens to veto a bill that is under discussion in order to influence congressional decision making.
 - II. A president typically vetoes about a third of the bills passed by Congress.
 - III. Congress is usually unable to override a president's veto.
- (A) I only
 - (B) III only
 - (C) I and III only
 - (D) II and III only
 - (E) I, II, and III
11. All of the following issues were decided at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 EXCEPT
- (A) representation in the legislature
 - (B) voting qualifications of the electorate
 - (C) the method of electing the president
 - (D) congressional power to override a presidential veto
 - (E) qualifications for members of the House and Senate
12. Which of the following is an example of soft money?
- (A) Money that is given to a member of the House of Representatives for a reelection campaign
 - (B) Money that is given to a major party candidate running for president
 - (C) Money that is given to a minor party candidate running for Senate
 - (D) Money that is given to candidates for Congress during primary campaigns
 - (E) Money that is given to a political party for advertisements about the party's goals

13. The usefulness to the president of having cabinet members as political advisers is undermined by the fact that
- (A) the president has little latitude in choosing cabinet members
 - (B) cabinet members have no political support independent of the president
 - (C) cabinet members are usually drawn from Congress and retain loyalties to Congress
 - (D) the loyalties of cabinet members are often divided between loyalty to the president and loyalty to their own executive departments
 - (E) the cabinet operates as a collective unit and individual members have no access to the president
14. All of the following are constitutional rights that neither the federal government nor the states can restrict EXCEPT the right to
- (A) remain silent during questioning
 - (B) be represented by counsel
 - (C) be indicted by grand jury
 - (D) not be tried for the same offense twice
 - (E) receive a trial by jury in a criminal case
15. In the electoral history of the United States, third parties have been effective vehicles of protest when they
- (A) aligned themselves with one of the major parties
 - (B) presented innovative programs in Congress
 - (C) dramatized issues and positions that were being ignored by the major parties
 - (D) chose the president by depriving either of the major parties of an electoral college victory
 - (E) supported a political agenda that appealed especially to women
16. Which of the following best defines the term “judicial activism”?
- (A) The tendency of judges to hear large numbers of cases on social issues
 - (B) The efforts of judges to lobby Congress for funds
 - (C) The unwillingness of judges to remove themselves from cases in which they have a personal interest
 - (D) The attempts by judges to influence election outcomes
 - (E) The attempts by judges to influence public policy through their case decisions
17. High levels of political participation have been found to be positively associated with which of the following?
- I. A high level of interest in politics
 - II. A sense of political efficacy
 - III. A strong sense of civic duty
- (A) III only
 - (B) I and II only
 - (C) I and III only
 - (D) II and III only
 - (E) I, II, and III
18. In the past 30 years, the single most important variable in determining the outcome of an election for a member of the House of Representatives has been
- (A) incumbency
 - (B) the candidate’s personal wealth
 - (C) the previous political office the candidate held in the district
 - (D) the candidate’s membership in the political party of the president
 - (E) the candidate’s positions on key social issues

19. Which of the following best describes the concept of federalism embodied in the United States government?
- (A) The Constitution divides power between a central government and its constituent governments, with some powers being shared.
 - (B) The Constitution grants all governmental powers to the central government, which may delegate authority to state governments.
 - (C) State governments join together and form a central government, which exists solely by approval of the state governments.
 - (D) The central government creates state governments.
 - (E) State governments are sovereign in all matters except foreign policy, which is reserved to the central government.
20. The power of the Rules Committee in the House of Representatives primarily stems from its authority to
- (A) choose the chairs of other standing committees and issue rules for the selection of subcommittee chairs
 - (B) initiate all spending legislation and hold budget hearings
 - (C) limit the time for debate and determine whether amendments to a bill can be considered
 - (D) determine the procedures by which nominations by the president will be approved by the House
 - (E) choose the president if no candidate wins a majority in the electoral college
21. Which of the following is a function of the White House Office?
- (A) Advising the president on political decisions
 - (B) Heading federal departments as the president's representative
 - (C) Preparing the national budget for the president
 - (D) Supervising national security agencies such as the CIA and FBI
 - (E) Acting as a liaison between the vice president and Congress
22. A major difference between political parties and interest groups is that interest groups generally do NOT
- (A) suggest new legislation that is supportive of their interests
 - (B) try to influence the outcome of legislation
 - (C) occupy a place on the ballot
 - (D) concern themselves with elections
 - (E) have a national organization
23. An election is a realigning or critical election if
- (A) one party controls the Congress and the other controls the presidency
 - (B) voter turnout is higher than expected
 - (C) it occurs during a major war
 - (D) there is a lasting change in party coalitions
 - (E) the same party controls both Congress and the presidency
24. Which of the following Supreme Court cases involved the principle of one person, one vote?
- (A) *Baker v. Carr*
 - (B) *Roe v. Wade*
 - (C) *Mapp v. Ohio*
 - (D) *Korematsu v. United States*
 - (E) *Gideon v. Wainwright*
25. The passage of broad legislation that leaves the making of specific rules to the executive branch is an example of
- (A) shared powers
 - (B) delegated authority
 - (C) checks and balances
 - (D) executive agreement
 - (E) a legislative veto

26. The redrawing of congressional districts in such a way as to give special advantage to one political party is referred to as
- (A) electioneering
 - (B) gerrymandering
 - (C) logrolling
 - (D) apportionment
 - (E) politicization
27. The details of legislation are usually worked out in which of the following settings?
- (A) A party caucus
 - (B) The majority leader's office
 - (C) The floor of the House
 - (D) Legislative hearings
 - (E) A subcommittee
28. A theoretical explanation of the operation of diverse interests in American politics is found in
- (A) the Virginia Plan
 - (B) John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*
 - (C) *The Federalist* papers
 - (D) the Declaration of Independence
 - (E) John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*
29. The framers of the original Constitution thought that which of the following would best protect judicial independence?
- (A) Presidential nomination and senatorial confirmation
 - (B) The circuit-riding system
 - (C) An odd number of Supreme Court justices
 - (D) Judicial impeachments
 - (E) Life tenure during good behavior

| How People Identify With Political Parties | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|
| All Voters | | | | | | |
| | Men | | | Women | | |
| | Rep % | Dem % | D-R diff | Rep % | Dem % | D-R diff |
| 2008 | 43 | 46 | +3 | 33 | 56 | +22 |
| 2004 | 48 | 43 | -5 | 40 | 51 | +11 |
| 2000 | 47 | 42 | -5 | 38 | 51 | +13 |
| 1996 | 49 | 43 | -6 | 39 | 53 | +14 |
| 1992 | 45 | 46 | +1 | 40 | 52 | +12 |

| Young Voters Ages 18–29 | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|
| | Men | | | Women | | |
| | Rep % | Dem % | D-R diff | Rep % | Dem % | D-R diff |
| 2008 | 38 | 52 | +14 | 28 | 63 | +35 |
| 2004 | 44 | 47 | +3 | 36 | 54 | +18 |
| 2000 | 46 | 44 | -2 | 37 | 53 | +16 |
| 1996 | 50 | 44 | -6 | 38 | 55 | +17 |
| 1992 | 52 | 42 | -10 | 42 | 50 | +8 |

Based on registered voters who identify with or lean towards the Democratic or Republican party; 1992–2004 figures are from the surveys conducted in the 12 months prior to each election; 2008 figures are from surveys conducted Oct. 2007–March 2008.

Source: Pew Research Center, Party Identification Among 18–29 Year Olds, April 28, 2008, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/813/gen-dems>

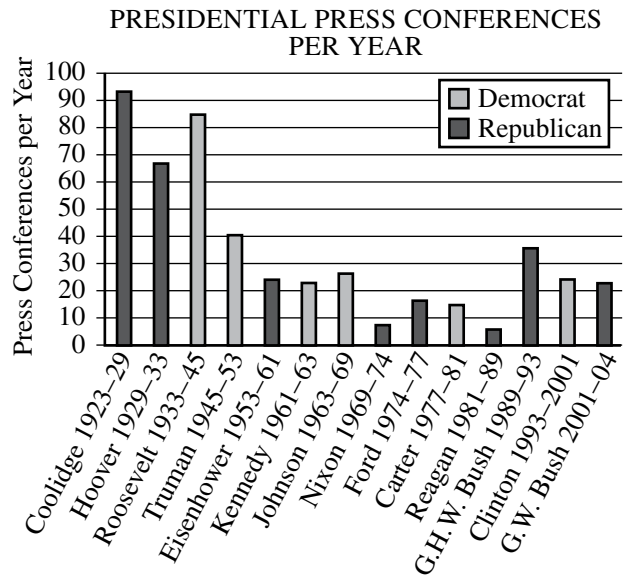
30. According to the table above, which of the following statements is true?
- (A) In every election, women between the ages of 18 and 29 were more likely to identify themselves as Republicans than were women of all ages.
 - (B) In the 2000 election, more than one-half of all men identified themselves as Democrats.
 - (C) In every election, the difference in partisan identification for men was greater than the difference in partisan identification for women.
 - (D) In the 1996 election, women between the ages of 18 and 29 were more likely to identify themselves as Democrats than were men between the ages of 18 and 29.
 - (E) In the 2008 election, more men between the ages of 18 and 29 identified themselves as Republicans than Democrats.

31. Which of the following activities of American labor unions is permissible by law?

- (A) Engaging in strikes
- (B) Denying the public access to a business
- (C) Refusing a subpoena to appear before Congress
- (D) Disobeying a court injunction to return to work
- (E) Requiring members to make political contributions

32. Which of the following best describes the relationship between socioeconomic status and participation in politics?

- (A) The lower one's socioeconomic status, the more likely it is that one will run for public office.
- (B) The higher one's socioeconomic status, the greater the probability of active involvement in the political process.
- (C) Adults who are unemployed have a greater personal interest in policy and tend to participate more actively in politics than do employed adults.
- (D) People in the lower socioeconomic status are the most likely to vote.
- (E) There is no relationship between socioeconomic status and political participation.



33. According to the information in the chart above, which of the following statements is true?

- (A) Republican presidents held far fewer press conferences per year than Democratic presidents.
- (B) The most recent presidents held fewer press conferences per year than presidents in the 1920s and 1930s.
- (C) President Clinton held more press conferences per year than his predecessor.
- (D) On average, President Nixon held more press conferences per year than President Johnson.
- (E) President Kennedy held more press conferences per year than President Eisenhower.

34. One important change in political culture since the Second World War is that United States citizens have become

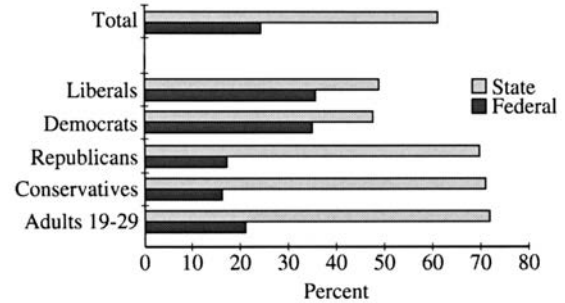
- (A) less trusting of governmental institutions and leaders
- (B) less likely to think of themselves as ideologically moderate
- (C) less likely to support civil rights
- (D) more likely to believe that their actions can influence government policy
- (E) more trusting of nongovernmental institutions and leaders

35. All of the following statements correctly describe judicial appointments at the federal level EXCEPT:
- (A) Congress nominates and confirms all appointments to the federal judiciary.
 - (B) Federal judicial appointments are typically evaluated by the American Bar Association or the Federalist Society.
 - (C) If a senator is a member of the president's party, tradition may allow the senator to exercise an informal veto over an individual being considered from the senator's state.
 - (D) Presidents seldom recommend for judicial appointment individuals from the opposition political party.
 - (E) Federal judgeships are often considered by presidents as patronage positions.
36. Which of the following agencies determines the domestic monetary policy of the United States?
- (A) The Council of Economic Advisors
 - (B) The United States Department of the Treasury
 - (C) The Office of Management and Budget
 - (D) The Federal Reserve Board
 - (E) The Export-Import Bank
37. Under which of the following conditions are interest groups most likely to influence policymaking?
- (A) When a problem has been dramatized by television network news
 - (B) When the president has made a major address on the subject
 - (C) When the parties in Congress have opposing positions on the issue
 - (D) When presidential candidates have been disagreeing with one another on the subject
 - (E) When the issue is a highly technical one requiring very detailed legislation
38. All of the following help to explain the president's difficulty in controlling cabinet-level agencies EXCEPT:
- (A) Agencies often have political support from interest groups.
 - (B) Agency staff often have information and technical expertise that the president and presidential advisers lack.
 - (C) The president cannot dismiss appointees after they have been confirmed by the Senate.
 - (D) Civil servants who remain in their jobs through changes of administration develop loyalties to their agencies.
 - (E) Congress is a competitor for influence over the bureaucracy.
39. In the Constitution as originally ratified in 1788, the provisions regarding which of the following most closely approximate popular, majoritarian democracy?
- (A) Election of members of the House of Representatives
 - (B) Election of members of the Senate
 - (C) Election of the president
 - (D) Ratification of treaties
 - (E) Confirmation of presidential appointments
40. The most likely and often the most powerful policy coalition of interests is likely to include a federal agency plus which of the following?
- (A) Related agencies in the bureaucracy and a congressional committee chairperson
 - (B) Congress and the president
 - (C) An interest group and the president
 - (D) An interest group and a congressional subcommittee
 - (E) An interest group and the majority party

41. Throughout most of the twentieth century, which of the following was most likely to occur in midterm congressional elections?
- (A) The party of the president typically lost seats in Congress, regardless of whether the president was a Republican or a Democrat.
 - (B) The party of the president typically gained seats in Congress, regardless of whether the president was a Republican or a Democrat.
 - (C) The Democratic Party gained seats in Congress, whereas the Republican Party lost seats.
 - (D) The Republican Party gained seats in Congress, whereas the Democratic Party lost seats.
 - (E) Voter turnout was typically higher than in presidential elections.

42. Delegates to the Republican and Democratic national conventions are primarily chosen
- (A) by local party leaders
 - (B) in primaries
 - (C) in state caucuses
 - (D) by members of Congress
 - (E) by lottery

TRUST IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VERSUS YOUR OWN STATE GOVERNMENT TO DO A BETTER JOB RUNNING THINGS



Source: *Washington Post*/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard University, 1995.

43. The chart above supports which of the following statements?
- I. Both Republicans and Democrats have more trust in the federal government to do a better job than state governments.
 - II. Most groups trust their own state governments more than the federal government.
 - III. Democrats trust the federal government more than Republicans.
 - IV. Liberals believe in big government.
- (A) I only
 - (B) III only
 - (C) II and III only
 - (D) II and IV only
 - (E) I, II, III, and IV
44. Which of the following political philosophers most influenced the writing of the United States Constitution?
- (A) Plato
 - (B) Machiavelli
 - (C) Locke
 - (D) Rousseau
 - (E) Marx

45. The concept of responsible party government emphasizes which of the following about elections?
- (A) Political parties will take positions similar to each other.
 - (B) Political parties will take clear, unambiguous positions.
 - (C) Voters will decide how to vote on the basis of how well the incumbent party satisfied them.
 - (D) Voters will vote mostly according to past identification.
 - (E) Special interest groups provide platforms and policy positions to political parties and their candidates.
46. Which of the following is a difference between the House of Representatives and the Senate?
- (A) Seniority is more important in the Senate than in the House.
 - (B) Leadership is more centralized in the Senate than in the House.
 - (C) The Senate has the exclusive power to ratify treaties.
 - (D) The Senate has more committees than does the House.
 - (E) The Senate may veto laws passed by the House, but the House may not veto senatorial legislation.
47. Which of the following was a consequence of the New Deal legislation passed during the Great Depression under the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt?
- (A) States gained additional powers to pass legislation to relieve the economic problems of the Depression.
 - (B) The federal government became a more important agent of change than in previous presidential administrations.
 - (C) New presidential appointments to federal courts limited the judicial powers of the Supreme Court.
 - (D) Social policy became the primary concern of state governments.
 - (E) Presidents have been much more likely to defend their creation of emergency acts by claiming executive privilege.
48. Congressional oversight is best described as
- (A) monitoring the federal bureaucracy
 - (B) monitoring the judicial branch and court rulings
 - (C) recommending and confirming federal judges
 - (D) regulating interstate commerce
 - (E) implementing public policy
49. The differences between the political attitudes of men and women are referred to as
- (A) the political gap
 - (B) the gender gap
 - (C) partisan politics
 - (D) party loyalty
 - (E) the median voter theory
50. According to the Constitution, which of the following decides the presidential election outcome in the event that a single candidate does not get a majority of electoral votes?
- (A) The Supreme Court
 - (B) The Senate
 - (C) The House of Representatives
 - (D) Both houses of Congress
 - (E) The sitting president
51. If the vice presidency of the United States is vacated, the Constitution stipulates that the president must
- (A) appoint a new vice president with the approval of the House only
 - (B) appoint a new vice president with the approval of the Senate only
 - (C) appoint a new vice president with the approval of both houses of Congress
 - (D) instate the Speaker of the House as the new vice president
 - (E) leave the vice presidency vacant for the remainder of the term of office

52. James Madison’s goal of setting power against power to minimize the concentration of authority in any one branch of government is outlined in the Constitution as a system of
- (A) separation of powers
 - (B) checks and balances
 - (C) divided government
 - (D) national supremacy
 - (E) federalism
53. The declining number of marginal seats in Congress means that
- (A) fewer seats are won by 55% or less of the vote
 - (B) there are fewer minor committee assignments in Congress
 - (C) redistricting no longer affects elections
 - (D) members of third parties are more likely to be elected to Congress
 - (E) fewer minorities are elected to Congress
54. The ability of the media to define the importance of particular events and issues is called
- (A) preemption
 - (B) agenda setting
 - (C) investigative reporting
 - (D) minimal effects thesis
 - (E) adversarial journalism
55. The power of judicial review was established in
- (A) *McCulloch v. Maryland*
 - (B) *Gitlow v. New York*
 - (C) *Dandridge v. Williams*
 - (D) *Miranda v. Arizona*
 - (E) *Marbury v. Madison*
56. Which of the following is true of both the House of Representatives and the Senate?
- (A) Both chambers must approve the president’s nominees for judicial and administrative positions.
 - (B) Both chambers employ a complex system of permanent committees to assist them in carrying out their legislative duties.
 - (C) Both the Speaker of the House and the Senate’s president pro tempore are elected by majority vote of their respective chamber.
 - (D) Both chambers encourage and permit extensive discussion of important issues and proposed legislation on the chamber floor.
 - (E) When midterm vacancies occur in either chamber, state governors are permitted to appoint replacement members.
57. The authority of a chief executive to withhold approval from specific parts of appropriations bills passed by the legislature is known as
- (A) a pocket veto
 - (B) a line-item veto
 - (C) a legislative veto
 - (D) an executive order
 - (E) an executive privilege
58. The weakening of political parties is most often traced to
- (A) the single-member, winner-take-all system
 - (B) the growth of political action committees (PACs)
 - (C) Progressive Era reforms
 - (D) voters’ increasing level of education
 - (E) voter apathy

59. Which of the following contemporary political ideologies posits that government power should be used to promote individual economic security and redistribute resources, but rejects the notion that government should favor a particular set of social values?
- (A) Liberalism
 - (B) Conservatism
 - (C) Communitarianism
 - (D) Libertarianism
 - (E) Elitism
60. Which of the following best describes a referendum?
- (A) A chief executive appoints an independent commission to investigate allegations of political corruption.
 - (B) A legislature repeals an unpopular law to improve the electoral advantage of incumbents.
 - (C) A political party caucuses to choose its candidates for a general election.
 - (D) Citizens vote directly on laws proposed by a state legislature.
 - (E) Citizens initiate the process of removing elected officials from office.
61. Which of the following is true of federal administrative agencies?
- (A) All agencies are formally part of a cabinet-level department.
 - (B) They are seldom able to influence the formulation of national public policy.
 - (C) They collectively form one large institutional pyramid with a common purpose.
 - (D) Congress has no means of controlling administrative agencies.
 - (E) They have substantial influence over public policy through administrative discretion.
62. Which of the following is a check on the power of the United States Supreme Court?
- (A) Congress controls the number of justices who may sit on the Court.
 - (B) The Court has the power to enforce its decisions.
 - (C) Cases involving a state's laws can be heard only through the Court's original jurisdiction.
 - (D) The Court reviews all legislation after the president signs it into law.
 - (E) Congress cannot rewrite or repass a law that the Court has declared unconstitutional.
63. States, according to the full faith and credit clause of the Constitution
- (A) can coin money if they choose, but they cannot print national currency
 - (B) must honor public records, acts, and judicial proceedings of every other state
 - (C) are not required to extradite fugitives of justice from other states
 - (D) can choose to suppress information on their credit rating ahead of a bond issue
 - (E) have the right to regulate banking and issuers of credit
64. Which of the following is most likely to weaken party leadership in the Senate?
- (A) The confirmation of appointments to the Supreme Court
 - (B) The assignment of senators to permanent committees
 - (C) The use of filibuster by individual senators
 - (D) The removal of the president following impeachment
 - (E) The ratification of treaties presented by the president

65. The principal source of presidents' political influence is their
- (A) constitutional authority to declare war
 - (B) power to convene Congress
 - (C) constitutional authority to execute public policies
 - (D) power to dictate diplomatic relations with other countries
 - (E) constitutional authority to grant pardons
66. Among the expressed powers of the federal government enumerated in the Constitution of the United States is the power to
- (A) monitor discrimination in the workplace
 - (B) establish national political parties
 - (C) standardize the licensing of lawyers
 - (D) regulate interstate trade and commerce
 - (E) standardize high school curriculums across states
67. Which of the following accounts for the greatest percentage of expenditure for state and local governments in the United States?
- (A) Elementary and secondary education
 - (B) Public welfare
 - (C) Highways
 - (D) Health and hospitals
 - (E) Police
68. The use of initiative and referendum illustrates which of the following theories of governance?
- (A) Separation of powers
 - (B) Representative democracy
 - (C) Direct democracy
 - (D) Virtual democracy
 - (E) Abusive democracy
69. In the United States political system, the situation when one party controls the presidency while the opposing party controls both houses of Congress is known as
- (A) separation of powers
 - (B) checks and balances
 - (C) divided government
 - (D) dual federalism
 - (E) power elite
70. In *The Federalist* paper number 10, James Madison argued that
- (A) the growth of factions was inevitable in a democracy
 - (B) federalism would curb ambition among political leaders
 - (C) the Supreme Court is the least dangerous branch of government
 - (D) the Articles of Confederation would ensure the safety of the nation
 - (E) the government should restrict the growth of interest groups through legislation
71. The constitutional redistribution of House seats after the census every ten years is known as
- (A) malapportionment
 - (B) reapportionment
 - (C) redistricting
 - (D) gerrymandering
 - (E) referendum
72. Which of the following is true of the Articles of Confederation?
- (A) They were written shortly before the Declaration of Independence.
 - (B) They formed a national government with supremacy over the states.
 - (C) They included a bill of rights that was applied to the states.
 - (D) They provided for three branches of government.
 - (E) They created a national government with a legislature but no executive or judiciary.

73. According to the United States Constitution, who has the right to create inferior courts?
- (A) The president
 - (B) The Supreme Court
 - (C) The Congress
 - (D) The bureaucracy
 - (E) The Department of Justice
74. Which of the following is an example of monetary policy?
- (A) Raising taxes
 - (B) Funding foreign aid
 - (C) Cutting defense spending
 - (D) Increasing the reserve requirement
 - (E) Making budget allocations to the Treasury department
75. Congress has the least discretion to change spending for which of the following?
- (A) Defense and education spending
 - (B) Transportation and entitlement programs
 - (C) Interest on the national debt and defense programs
 - (D) Education and entitlement programs
 - (E) Interest on the national debt and entitlement programs
76. Which of the following statements is historically true of the electoral college?
- (A) The electoral college was added to the Constitution as an amendment and has been used only since the 1920s.
 - (B) Third-party candidates are often overrepresented in the electoral college results.
 - (C) The winner of the electoral college also usually wins the popular vote.
 - (D) The electoral college allows small states to become swing states because each state gets two electoral college votes.
 - (E) In the rare case of a tie vote in the electoral college, the winner is chosen by the popular vote results.
77. Which of the following actions gives the president an advantage over Congress in promoting policy?
- (A) Using the franking privilege
 - (B) Impounding funding for projects of which the president disapproves
 - (C) Invoking senatorial courtesy
 - (D) Utilizing the media through the bully pulpit
 - (E) Invoking the power to end a filibuster
78. Which of the following is true of political parties?
- (A) They are highly centralized organizations that rely very little on state participants.
 - (B) They establish guidelines of behavior and insist that their candidates follow these guidelines.
 - (C) They require all members to pay dues.
 - (D) They try to gain control of government by winning elections.
 - (E) They generally concentrate their efforts on a single policy area.
79. Which of the following best defines political culture?
- (A) It is the process by which one acquires opinions about government.
 - (B) It is the shared attitudes of a people regarding government.
 - (C) It is the belief that no one person can effect change in government.
 - (D) It is the willingness of people to accept government's right to rule.
 - (E) It is a statement by government officials about how citizens should behave.
80. Which of the following is the strongest determinant of an individual's voting behavior?
- (A) His or her socioeconomic background
 - (B) Suggestions from family members
 - (C) Newspaper and media endorsements
 - (D) Political party affiliation
 - (E) His or her opinions on policy issues

81. In which of the following cases did the Supreme Court establish the precedent that a right to privacy stems from several amendments in the Bill of Rights?
- (A) *Griswold v. Connecticut*
 - (B) *New York Times v. Sullivan*
 - (C) *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*
 - (D) *Lawrence v. Texas*
 - (E) *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*
82. Each of the following is a power of Congress EXCEPT
- (A) recognizing foreign governments
 - (B) declaring war
 - (C) ratifying treaties
 - (D) confirming ambassadors
 - (E) appropriating funds for war
83. Individuals who identify themselves as conservative would most likely support which of the following?
- (A) Establishing universal health care
 - (B) Lowering barriers to trade
 - (C) Increasing luxury taxes
 - (D) Tightening environmental regulations
 - (E) Increasing protective tariffs
84. The phrase “divided government” refers to
- (A) Democrats and Republicans forming a coalition government
 - (B) the separation of powers among the three branches of the federal government
 - (C) the allocation of different kinds of legislative work to congressional committees
 - (D) one political party controlling the presidency while another political party controls one or both houses of Congress
 - (E) the Supreme Court striking down a law passed by Congress and signed by the president
85. Which of the following factors has most contributed to the persistence of the two-party system in the United States?
- (A) Plurality rules for determining election outcomes
 - (B) Representation via multimember districts
 - (C) Proportional representation in legislatures
 - (D) Constitutional provisions for parties outlined by the framers
 - (E) The influence and number of interest groups in politics
86. As compared with Republicans and Democrats, Independents in the United States are typically
- (A) less likely to vote in elections
 - (B) less likely to engage in split-ticket voting
 - (C) more likely to join an interest group
 - (D) more likely to have a strong sense of political efficacy
 - (E) more likely to share the ideology of their family members

87. Which of the following best describes the relationship between the media and citizens?
- (A) Most media are independent and unbiased, allowing citizens to form their own opinions.
 - (B) The media are regulated by the government to ensure that consumers receive factually accurate information.
 - (C) The media have greater influence in shaping the political ideology of citizens than any other factor does.
 - (D) Citizens have little choice about how to consume media because of the consolidation of media ownership.
 - (E) Citizens tend to seek out media that reinforce rather than challenge existing ideological views.
88. The Supreme Court's decision in *Arizona v. United States* (2012), which held that Congress, not the states, has the sole authority to regulate immigration, best illustrates which of the following features of the Constitution?
- (A) Federalism
 - (B) Republicanism
 - (C) Popular sovereignty
 - (D) Checks and balances
 - (E) Separation of powers
89. When judicial nominees come before the Senate Judiciary Committee to testify, the Senate is fulfilling which of its roles?
- (A) Oversight
 - (B) Advice and consent
 - (C) Appropriations
 - (D) Judicial review
 - (E) Ratification
90. If a party to a federal civil lawsuit loses the case and chooses to appeal, it would take the appeal to the
- (A) United States District Court
 - (B) United States Courts of Appeals
 - (C) United States Supreme Court
 - (D) state superior court
 - (E) state supreme court

Study Resources

Most textbooks used in college-level American government courses cover the topics in the outline given earlier, but the approaches to certain topics and the emphases given to them may differ. To prepare for the American Government examination, it is advisable to study one or more college textbooks, which can be found in most college bookstores. When selecting a textbook, check the table of contents against the knowledge and skills required for this test.

Visit clep.collegeboard.org/test-preparation for additional American government resources. You can also find suggestions for exam preparation in Chapter IV of the *Official Study Guide*. In addition, many college faculty post their course materials on their schools' websites.

Answer Key

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | C | 46. | C |
| 2. | B | 47. | B |
| 3. | B | 48. | A |
| 4. | A | 49. | B |
| 5. | B | 50. | C |
| 6. | D | 51. | C |
| 7. | A | 52. | B |
| 8. | C | 53. | A |
| 9. | C | 54. | B |
| 10. | C | 55. | E |
| 11. | B | 56. | B |
| 12. | E | 57. | B |
| 13. | D | 58. | C |
| 14. | C | 59. | A |
| 15. | C | 60. | D |
| 16. | E | 61. | E |
| 17. | E | 62. | A |
| 18. | A | 63. | B |
| 19. | A | 64. | C |
| 20. | C | 65. | C |
| 21. | A | 66. | D |
| 22. | C | 67. | A |
| 23. | D | 68. | C |
| 24. | A | 69. | C |
| 25. | B | 70. | A |
| 26. | B | 71. | B |
| 27. | E | 72. | E |
| 28. | C | 73. | C |
| 29. | E | 74. | D |
| 30. | D | 75. | E |
| 31. | A | 76. | C |
| 32. | B | 77. | D |
| 33. | B | 78. | D |
| 34. | A | 79. | B |
| 35. | A | 80. | D |
| 36. | D | 81. | A |
| 37. | E | 82. | A |
| 38. | C | 83. | B |
| 39. | A | 84. | D |
| 40. | D | 85. | A |
| 41. | A | 86. | A |
| 42. | B | 87. | E |
| 43. | C | 88. | A |
| 44. | C | 89. | B |
| 45. | B | 90. | B |

Test Measurement Overview

Format

There are multiple forms of the computer-based test, each containing a predetermined set of scored questions. The examinations are not adaptive. There may be some overlap between different forms of a test: any of the forms may have a few questions, many questions, or no questions in common. Some overlap may be necessary for statistical reasons.

In the computer-based test, not all questions contribute to the candidate’s score. Some of the questions presented to the candidate are being pretested for use in future editions of the tests and will not count toward his or her score.

Scoring Information

CLEP examinations are scored without a penalty for incorrect guessing. The candidate’s raw score is simply the number of questions answered correctly. However, this raw score is not reported; the raw scores are translated into a scaled score by a process that adjusts for differences in the difficulty of the questions on the various forms of the test.

Scaled Scores

The scaled scores are reported on a scale of 20–80. Because the different forms of the tests are not always exactly equal in difficulty, raw-to-scale conversions may in some cases differ from form to form. The easier a form is judged to be, the higher the raw score required to attain a given scaled score. **Table 1** indicates the relationship between number correct (raw score) and scaled score across all forms.

The Recommended Credit-Granting Score

Table 1 also indicates the recommended credit-granting score, which represents the performance of students earning a grade of C in the corresponding course. The recommended B-level score represents B-level performance in equivalent course work. These scores were established as the result of a Standard Setting Study, the most recent having been conducted in 2004. The recommended credit-granting scores are based upon the judgments of a panel of experts currently teaching equivalent courses at various colleges and universities. These

experts evaluate each question in order to determine the raw scores that would correspond to B and C levels of performance. Their judgments are then reviewed by a test development committee, which, in consultation with test content and psychometric specialists, makes a final determination. The standard-setting study is described more fully in the earlier section entitled “CLEP Credit Granting” on page 5.

Panel members participating in the most recent study were:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Lydia Andrade | University of the Incarnate Word |
| David Barker | University of Pittsburgh |
| Joshua Behr | Old Dominion University |
| Michael Crespin | Michigan State University |
| Jon Dalager | Georgetown College |
| John Forren | Miami University |
| Susan Grogan | St. Mary’s College of Maryland |
| Randy Hanson | Colby-Sawyer College |
| Alice Jackson | Morgan State University |
| Aubrey Jewett | University of Central Florida |
| Carlos Juarez | Hawaii Pacific University |
| Kalu Kalu | Emporia State University |
| Linda Keith | Collin County Community College |
| Angela Lewis | University of Alabama at Birmingham |
| Kara Lindaman | University of Wisconsin — La Crosse |
| DeWayne Lucas | Hobart & William Smith College |
| Donald Melton | Arapahoe Community College |
| Clarissa Peterson | DePauw University |
| James Riddlesperger | Texas Christian University |
| Joseph Stewart, Jr. | University of New Mexico |
| Kenneth Tillett | Southwestern Oklahoma State University |
| Paul Weizer | Fitchburg State College |

After the recommended credit-granting scores are determined, a statistical procedure called scaling is applied to establish the exact correspondences between raw and scaled scores. Note that a scaled score of 50 is assigned to the raw score that corresponds to the recommended credit-granting score for C-level performance, and a high but usually less-than-perfect raw score is selected and assigned a scaled score of 80.

Table 1: American Government Interpretive Score Data

American Council on Education (ACE) Recommended Number of Semester Hours of Credit: 3

| Course Grade | Scaled Score | Number Correct |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| | 80 | - |
| | 79 | - |
| | 78 | - |
| | 77 | - |
| | 76 | - |
| | 75 | 90 |
| | 74 | 89 |
| | 73 | 87-88 |
| | 72 | 86 |
| | 71 | 85 |
| | 70 | 83-84 |
| | 69 | 82-83 |
| | 68 | 81-82 |
| | 67 | 80 |
| | 66 | 78-79 |
| | 65 | 77-78 |
| | 64 | 76-77 |
| B | 63 | 75-76 |
| | 62 | 73-74 |
| | 61 | 72-73 |
| | 60 | 71-72 |
| | 59 | 70-71 |
| | 58 | 68-69 |
| | 57 | 67-68 |
| | 56 | 66-67 |
| | 55 | 65-66 |
| | 54 | 63-65 |
| | 53 | 62-63 |
| | 52 | 61-62 |
| | 51 | 60-61 |
| C | 50* | 59-60 |
| | 49 | 57-59 |
| | 48 | 56-57 |
| | 47 | 55-56 |
| | 46 | 54-55 |
| | 45 | 52-54 |
| | 44 | 51-52 |
| | 43 | 50-51 |
| | 42 | 49-50 |
| | 41 | 48-49 |
| | 40 | 46-47 |
| | 39 | 45-46 |
| | 38 | 44-45 |
| | 37 | 43-44 |
| | 36 | 42-43 |
| | 35 | 40-41 |
| | 34 | 39-40 |
| | 33 | 38-39 |
| | 32 | 37-38 |
| | 31 | 35-36 |
| | 30 | 34-35 |
| | 29 | 33-34 |
| | 28 | 32-33 |
| | 27 | 30-32 |
| | 26 | 29-30 |
| | 25 | 28-29 |
| | 24 | 27-28 |
| | 23 | 26-27 |
| | 22 | 24-25 |
| | 21 | 23-24 |
| | 20 | 0-23 |

*Credit-granting score recommended by ACE.

Note: The number-correct scores for each scaled score on different forms may vary depending on form difficulty.

Validity

Validity is a characteristic of a particular use of the test scores of a group of examinees. If the scores are used to make inferences about the examinees' knowledge of a particular subject, the validity of the scores for that purpose is the extent to which those inferences can be trusted to be accurate.

One type of evidence for the validity of test scores is called content-related evidence of validity. It is usually based upon the judgments of a set of experts who evaluate the extent to which the content of the test is appropriate for the inferences to be made about the examinees' knowledge. The committee that developed the CLEP American Government examination selected the content of the test to reflect the content of American Government courses at most colleges, as determined by a curriculum survey. Since colleges differ somewhat in the content of the courses they offer, faculty members should, and are urged to, review the content outline and the sample questions to ensure that the test covers core content appropriate to the courses at their college.

Another type of evidence for test-score validity is called criterion-related evidence of validity. It consists of statistical evidence that examinees who score high on the test also do well on other measures of the knowledge or skills the test is being used to measure. Criterion-related evidence for the validity of CLEP scores can be obtained by studies comparing students' CLEP scores with the grades they received in corresponding classes, or other measures of achievement or ability. CLEP and the College Board conduct these studies, called Admitted Class Evaluation Service or ACES, for individual colleges that meet certain criteria at the college's request. Please contact CLEP for more information.

Reliability

The reliability of the test scores of a group of examinees is commonly described by two statistics: the reliability coefficient and the standard error of measurement (SEM). The reliability coefficient is the correlation between the scores those examinees get (or would get) on two independent replications of the measurement process. The reliability coefficient is intended to indicate the

stability/consistency of the candidates' test scores, and is often expressed as a number ranging from .00 to 1.00. A value of .00 indicates total lack of stability, while a value of 1.00 indicates perfect stability. The reliability coefficient can be interpreted as the correlation between the scores examinees would earn on two forms of the test that had no questions in common.

Statisticians use an internal-consistency measure to calculate the reliability coefficients for the CLEP exam.¹ This involves looking at the statistical relationships among responses to individual multiple-choice questions to estimate the reliability of the total test score. The SEM is an estimate of the amount by which a typical test-taker's score differs from the average of the scores that a test-taker would have gotten on all possible editions of the test. It is expressed in score units of the test. Intervals extending one standard error above and below the true score for a test-taker will include 68 percent of that test-taker's obtained scores. Similarly, intervals extending two standard errors above and below the true score will include 95 percent of the test-taker's obtained scores. The standard error of measurement is inversely related to the reliability coefficient. If the reliability of the test were 1.00 (if it perfectly measured the candidate's knowledge), the standard error of measurement would be zero.

An additional index of reliability is the conditional standard of error of measurement (CSEM). Since different editions of this exam contain different questions, a test-taker's score would not be exactly the same on all possible editions of the exam. The CSEM indicates how much those scores would vary. It is the typical distance of those scores (all for the same test-taker) from their average. A test-taker's CSEM on a test cannot be computed, but by using the data from many test-takers, it can be estimated. The CSEM estimate reported here is for a test-taker whose average score, over all possible forms of the exam, would be equal to the recommended C-level credit-granting score.

Scores on the CLEP examination in American Government are estimated to have a reliability coefficient of 0.91. The standard error of measurement is 3.19 scaled-score points. The conditional standard error of measurement at the recommended C-level credit-granting score is 3.42 scaled-score points.

¹ The formula used is known as Kuder-Richardson 20, or KR-20, which is equivalent to a more general formula called coefficient alpha.