**Political Participation and Voting:**

**Expressing the Popular Will**

**Multiple Choice**

1. Citizen participation in politics is the essential component of the ideal of

a. liberty.

b. equality.

c. self-government.

d. individualism.

1. collectivism.

Answer: c

2. Women gained the right to vote

a. with passage of the Bill of Rights.

b. shortly after the Civil War.

c. early in the twentieth century.

d. with passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

1. during the era of Jacksonian democracy.

Answer: c

3. The poll tax was used to

a. disenfranchise African Americans in the South.

b. finance election campaigns.

c. ensure that women voted with their husbands, who legally controlled the money in a marriage.

d. ensure that the people who voted would take the vote seriously.

1. help subsidize public education in the North.

Answer: a

4. One of the reasons why voter turnout is lower in the United States than in Western European countries is that

a. Americans pay less attention to politics.

b. U.S. registration laws place a greater burden on the individual.

c. the U.S. population is not as well-educated.

d. Europeans must pay a huge fine if they fail to vote.

1. None of the answers are correct.

Answer: b

5. Voter registration in the United States

a. was introduced as a means of keeping white males without property from voting.

b. has been a device by which officials have discouraged some groups from voting.

c. is the responsibility of the government to add individuals automatically to the registration rolls.

d. applies to voting in general elections but not primary elections.

1. has vastly increased voter turnout.

Answer: b

6. The frequency of elections in the United States reduces voter turnout by

a. discouraging local politicians from playing an active role in presidential election.

b. creating more complex registration requirements.

c. focusing too much attention on state and local elections.

d. increasing the personal effort needed to participate in all elections.

1. increasing the amount of taxes paid at the polls.

Answer: d

7. States and localities often choose to hold key office elections in non-presidential election years to

a. maximize voter turnout.

b. insulate their election races from the possible effects of the presidential campaign.

c. keep the public’s interest in elections at a high level at all times.

d. allow local and state candidates to get more attention from the press.

1. All of the answers are correct.

Answer: b

8. Compared to parties in Europe, parties in the United States are more likely to

a. divide more sharply over economic policies.

b. target the voters of a particular religion or class.

c. adopt an extreme position.

d. advocate overlapping policies.

1. be ideological.

Answer: d

9. Regular voters are characterized by

a. a strong sense of alienation which motivates them to try to change government.

b. a strong sense of civic duty.

c. a desire to use government as a vehicle to help other Americans rather than themselves.

d. a strong sense of independence which motivates them to try to defeat incumbents.

1. All of the answers are correct.

Answer: b

10. As distinct from alienation, apathy is

a. associated with a low rate of voter turnout.

b. a feeling of powerlessness.

c. a general lack of interest in politics.

d. a sign that the political system is working properly.

1. widespread among affluent Americans.

Answer: c

11. Which group of Americans has the lowest rate of voter turnout?

a. older people (60 years-of-age or more)

b. younger people (30 years-of-age or less)

c. men

d. women

1. people with college degrees

Answer: b

12. Citizens’ income and education level affects the likelihood they will turnout to vote on Election Day

a. more in the United States than in Western Europe.

b. more in Western Europe than in the United States.

c. only in national elections in the United States.

d. only in national elections in Western Europe.

1. None of the answers are correct.

Answer: a

13. In comparison with citizens in European democracies, Americans are less likely to

a. vote in national elections.

b. actively work in an election campaign.

c. participate in community activities.

d. join an interest group.

1. All of the answers are correct.

Answer: a

14. The chief obstacle to Americans’ participation in community activities is

a. the lack of opportunity because there are few groups active at this level.

b. the lack of personal motivation to get involved.

c. the low potential for success, since key decisions are made at the national level.

1. the low potential for success, since key decisions are made at the state level.
2. All of the answers are correct.

Answer: b

15. Which of the following is an inaccurate statement about Americans’ exposure to news?

a. The Internet’s news content is the main reason why people make use of the Internet.

b. Most people do not follow the news on a daily basis.

c. People who follow the news closely are generally better informed about politics than those who do not.

d. Young people are less likely than older people to follow the news closely.

1. Americans today are getting their news from a wider variety of sources than they did a few decades ago.

Answer: a

16. All of the following tend to decrease voter turnout except

a. sharp differences between major parties.

b. alienation.

c. frequent elections.

d. a registration system that places the burden of registration on the individual rather than on government officials.

1. lack of interest in politics.

Answer: a

17. Social movements are a way for

a. those dissatisfied with government to get its attention.

b. the politically weak to force government to be more responsive than usual to their interests.

c. people to present their views through more dramatic means than conventional political activity.

d. people to get news coverage of their issue.

1. All of the answers are correct.

Answer: e

18. A broad effort to achieve change by citizens who feel government is not responsive to their interests is called

a. a social movement.

b. a voter upsurge.

c. a citizen lobby.

d. a popular resistance.

1. a regular election.

Answer: a

19. Elections are

a. a means by which government controls the people.

b. a means by which the people control government.

c. the only popular form of participation that, in most democracies, involves a majority of citizens.

d. All of the answers are correct.

1. None of the answers are correct.

Answer: d

20. When it comes to protest activities, a majority of Americans are

a. actively involved at one time or another in their lives.

b. willing to contribute through financial support but not through active participation.

c. not highly supportive of such activities despite America’s tradition of free expression.

d. actively involved only later in their lives when they feel more secure that a protest is justified.

1. supportive of violent activities if the cause warrants such an approach.

Answer: c

21. Political participation among Americans can best be described as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ activity.

a. futile

b. middle-class dominated

c. female-dominated

d. universal

1. working-class dominated

Answer: b

22. An original purpose of a system of voter registration was to

a. prevent fraudulent voting.

b. certify party membership.

c. educate people about the importance of voting.

d. help candidates know the size of the electorate.

1. help the political parties increase voter turnout.

Answer: a

23. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ holds more elections than any other democracy and is the only one to rely extensively on primary elections.

a. France

b. The United States

c. Germany

d. Great Britain

1. Belgium

Answer: b

24. When citizens have a high degree of trust in their government, the level of voting turnout tends to

a. increase.

b. decrease.

c. be largely unaffected.

d. increase among lower-income citizens but decrease among higher-income citizens.

1. None of the answers are correct.

Answer: a

25. Protest activity is an exception to the pattern for most other form of political participation in that it

a. has broad public support.

b. is supportive of existing policies.

c. is more likely to involve younger citizens rather than older ones.

d. is rooted in prejudice.

1. usually takes place in the evenings.

Answer: c

26. The prevalence of mass elections helps the political system by

a. providing leaders a means for deceiving the public.

b. lessening the frequency and need to protest violently.

c. assuring the voter turnout will be very high among all citizens.

d. All of the answers are correct.

1. None of the answers are correct.

Answer: b

27. Citizens in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are most likely to volunteer time and money to promote community causes.

a. Germany

b. France

c. Great Britain

d. the United States

1. There is no difference between the four nations.

Answer: d

28. The six states that allow residents to register to vote at the polls on Election Day

a. are noted for the high level of corruption in their voting process.

b. are all located in the Southwest because this procedure is designed to encourage participation by Hispanics.

c. have such low levels of interest in politics that they almost had to adopt this registration procedure to boost voter turnout.

d. have an average voter turnout level that is much higher than the average turnout level of other states.

1. are so totally controlled by one political party that the party is not concerned about losing control by having more voters come to the polls on Election Day.

Answer: d

29. If Americans vote less than Europeans, why are they more likely to work in a political campaign than citizens in Europe?

a. America’s federal structure provides more campaign opportunities.

b. European candidates seldom need campaign workers.

c. Americans have more leisure time than Europeans.

d. U.S. candidates pay campaign workers whereas European candidates do not.

1. Laws in some U.S. communities require citizens to participate in campaigns.

Answer: a

30. Over the past few decades, the trend in citizen participation in lobbying groups is participation through

a. giving money.

b. voting on the group’s leadership.

c. voting on the group’s lobbying agenda.

d. attending protest marches on a frequent basis.

1. going to the group’s meetings.

Answer: a

31. Compared with U.S. citizens of higher income, those of lower income are

a. much less likely to vote in elections.

b. about equally likely to vote in elections.

c. much more likely to vote in elections.

d. much less likely to vote in elections, a pattern that is also true in European democracies.

1. None of the answers are correct

Answer: a

32. During \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the age of eligibility for voting was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen.

a. the Civil War

b. World War I

c. World War II

d. the Korean War

1. the Vietnam War

Answer: e

33. In the United States, the primary responsibility for registration of the individual voter

rests with the

a. state and local governments.

b. local courts.

c. employer.

d. individual.

1. federal government.

Answer: d

34. Since 1920, the level of turnout in presidential elections has never exceeded \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ percent.

a. 70

b. 60

c. 50

d. 40

1. 30

Answer: a

35. The “Motor Voter” law

a. was passed in 1993.

b. made it easier for citizens to register to vote.

c. linked voter registration to the vehicle registration process.

d. All of the answers are correct.

1. None of the answers are correct.

Answer: d

36. Which of the following statements is true?

a. Voter turnout rates for men and women are somewhat similar.

b. Hispanic Americans have a lower rate of voter turnout than do non-Hispanic whites in presidential elections.

c. Race was historically a basis for denying some Americans the right to vote.

d. African Americans have a somewhat lower voter turnout rate than do white Americans.

e. All of the answers are correct.

Answer: e

37. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ elections tend to draw the largest percentage of voters.

a. Primary

b. Mayoral

c. Congressional

d. Gubernatorial

1. Presidential

Answer: e

38. According to recent public opinion polls, about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ percent of adult Americans have participated in an anti-war demonstration.

a. 2

b. 20

c. 40

d. 60

1. 80

Answer: a

39. The citizens of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are most likely to participate as campaign volunteers during an election.

a. the Netherlands

b. Great Britain

c. the United States

d. Germany

1. France

Answer: c

40. When the United States was founded, who was eligible to vote?

a. Everyone—there was universal suffrage.

b. all males and females who were at least 21 years of age

c. only white males who owned property

d. only citizens who had lived in the nation for at least ten years

1. All native-born citizens could vote.

Answer: c

41. The poll tax was outlawed in federal elections by the

a. Voting Rights Act of 1965.

b. Twenty-fourth Amendment.

c. Supreme Court which ruled the tax unconstitutional.

d. Nineteenth Amendment.

1. Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Answer: b

**Essay/Short Answer**

1. Describe three systemic reasons why Americans vote at a lower rate than Western Europeans.

Answer: Americans vote at a lower rate than Europeans for three reasons: registration requirements, frequency of elections, and a lack of party differentiation. Although both American and European governments require their citizens to register to vote, European governments are responsible for locating and placing individuals on registration rolls. In the United States it is up to the individual to register. This personal responsibility discourages registration and hence lowers American voter turnout. The frequency of American elections reduces voter turnout by increasing the effort required to participate in all of them. Primary elections, which are uniquely American, are particularly burdensome because they require voters to go to the polls twice to fill the single presidential office. A third reason for low voter turnout is that many Americans do not see much difference between the two major parties; in their judgment, the issue of which one is in power does not have highly serious consequences. Both parties tend toward middle-class policies, which discourages turnout of lower-income people.

2. Give three reasons why some Americans vote regularly while others do not.

Answer: One reason some Americans vote more regularly than others is that they have a more developed sense of civic duty than others. Civic duty is a belief that citizens have certain responsibilities, one of which is voting. Citizens who tend not to vote have a weak sense of civic duty. Another factor is age. Because younger people are less likely to have the political interest that can come with home ownership, permanent employment, and a family, they are less likely to vote than older people. Finally, voting is closely related to socioeconomic status. The higher a person’s socioeconomic status, the more likely he or

she will vote. This relationship is particularly strong in the United States because there is no socialist or labor party to appeal to people of low socioeconomic status.

3. Define unconventional activism and its aims, and provide historical examples. Describe Americans’ attitudes toward unconventional activism.

Answer: Unconventional activism is another name for protest politics. These activities can threaten established authority, and occasionally provoke a violent response from government, as the Kent State shootings illustrate. Through demonstrations, picket lines, and marches, protesters dramatize their opposition to official policies. The abolitionist, labor, women’s suffrage, and civil rights movements all used unconventional activism to varying degrees. In general, most Americans are not highly supportive of protest politics.

4. Why are people of higher socioeconomic status more likely to be politically active?

Answer: Socioeconomic status refers to a person’s educational and income level. Americans at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder tend to vote less than those at the top. People of a higher socioeconomic status are more likely to possess the financial resources, communication skills, and time to engage in potentially rewarding political activities, such as voting. Also, the U.S. political system does not have structures (for example, a labor party or universal registration) that would encourage lower-status citizens to participate.

5. Should elections be held on weekends or perhaps as national holidays—why or why not?

Answer: This is an open-ended question. Conducting elections on weekends or as national holidays would make turnout easier, but would apathetic citizens change their behavior and vote, or would they ignore elections as usual? Also, making elections national holidays would have consequences for the national economy.