

# Civics and Government: Essential Knowledge for the GED Test and Everyday Life

Tuesdays for Teachers – May 20, 2025





Debi Faucette, SRM and PD  
Manager



Adora Beard, SRM and  
Executive Community and  
Outreach Partner Manager



Susan Pittman,  
Education Consultant



# Before We Get Started



During the webinar, **please:**

1. Keep your sound and video **muted**. This will limit background noise.
2. Ask questions using the **chat function**.
3. Keep in mind that the session is being **recorded** for future viewing.

# Think About It!

- Like Pearl Harbor for their grandparents, and the Kennedy assassination for their parents, 9/11 is an historical event.
- The primary use of a phone has always been to take pictures.
- There have always been indecisive debates regarding the future of the Electoral College.
- Because of Richard Reid's explosive footwear at 30,000 feet, passengers have always had to take off their shoes to slide through security on the ground.
- PayPal has always been an online option for purchasers.

- With flyovers, honor guards, and "God Bless America," sporting events have always been marked by emphatic patriotism.
- YouTube has become the video version of Wikipedia.
- Quarterback Troy Aikman has always called the plays live from the press booth.
- Congress has always banned human cloning completely.
- Blackboards have never been dumb.

# Today's Focus

What does the research say?

What does the test require?

What do students really need to know?

What can you do?

Session Q&A



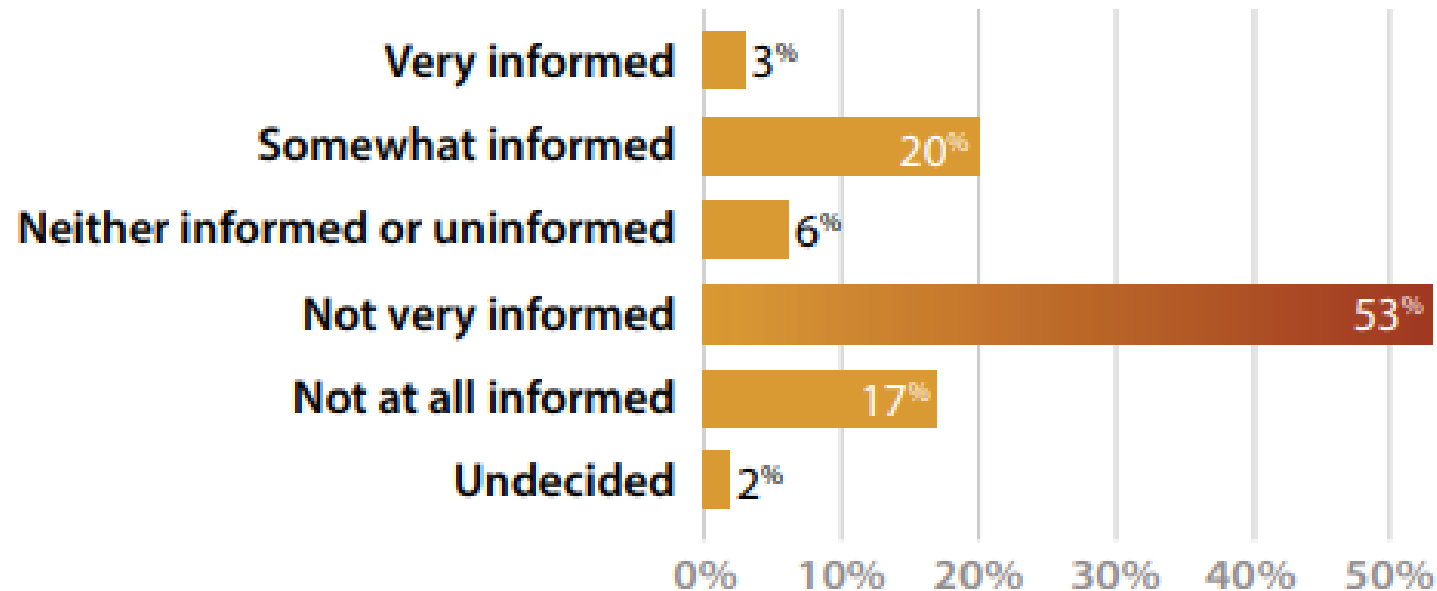
# The Good News

- **87%** know that the first 10 amendments to the Constitution are called the Bill of Rights
- **88%** know that the Declaration of Independence marked independence from Great Britain
- **84%** know the rule of law means no one is above the law
- **78%** know the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives is next in line after the president and vice-president
- **69%** know the three branches of government can check the powers of the other two

# The Bad News!

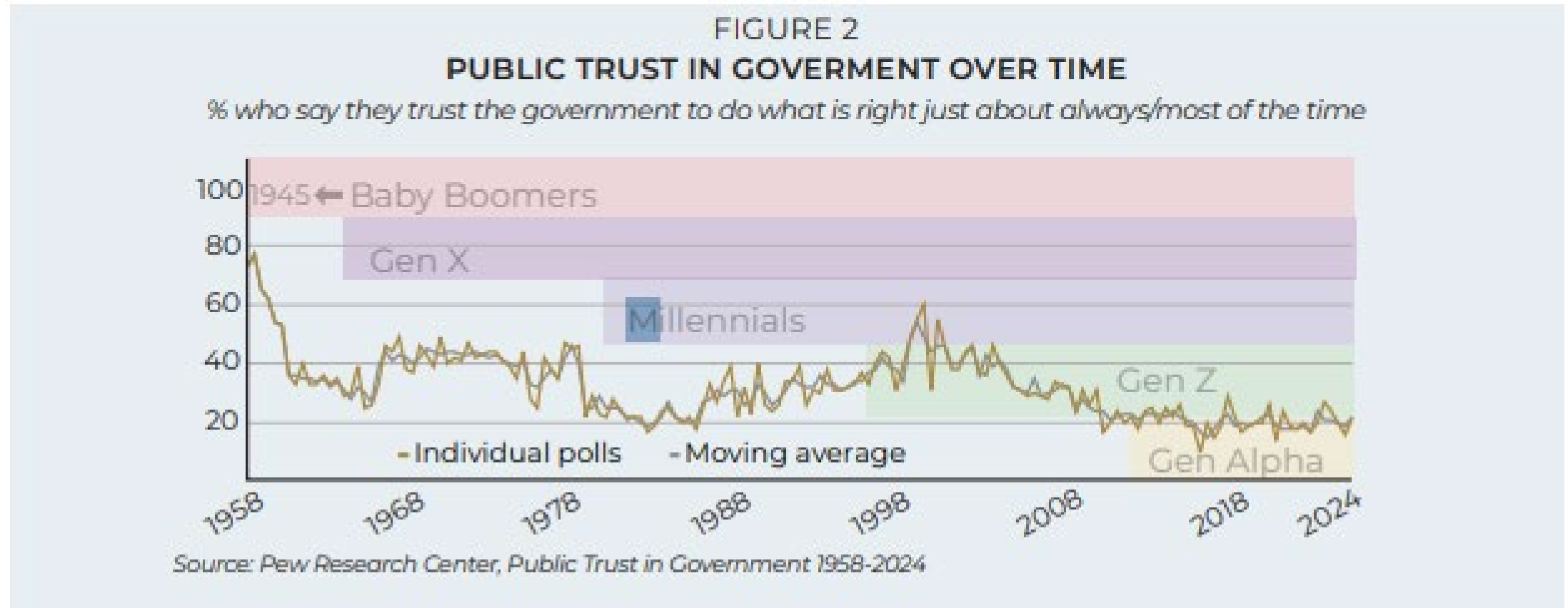


In your opinion, how informed is the general public about how government works?



American Bar Association (ABA) Survey of Civic Literacy, 2023

# Trust in Government



A lack of civics knowledge goes hand-in-hand with a lack of trust in government institutions— research has shown that these states reinforce each other.

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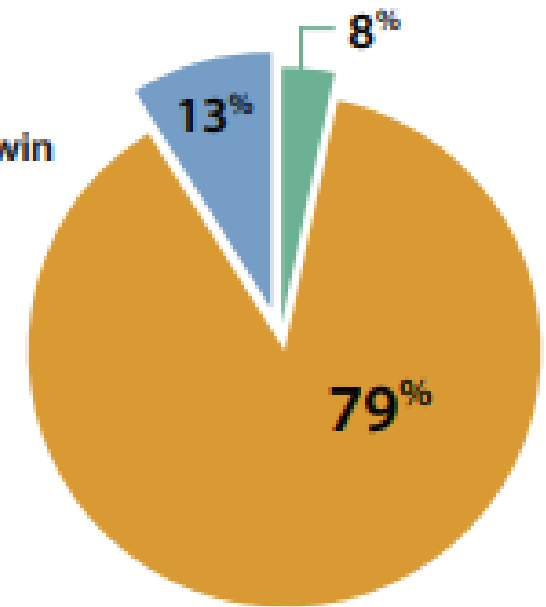


# What People Want!



**Do you want your government leaders to hold their ground until they win or work toward compromise?**

- Hold their ground until they win
- Work toward compromise
- Don't know

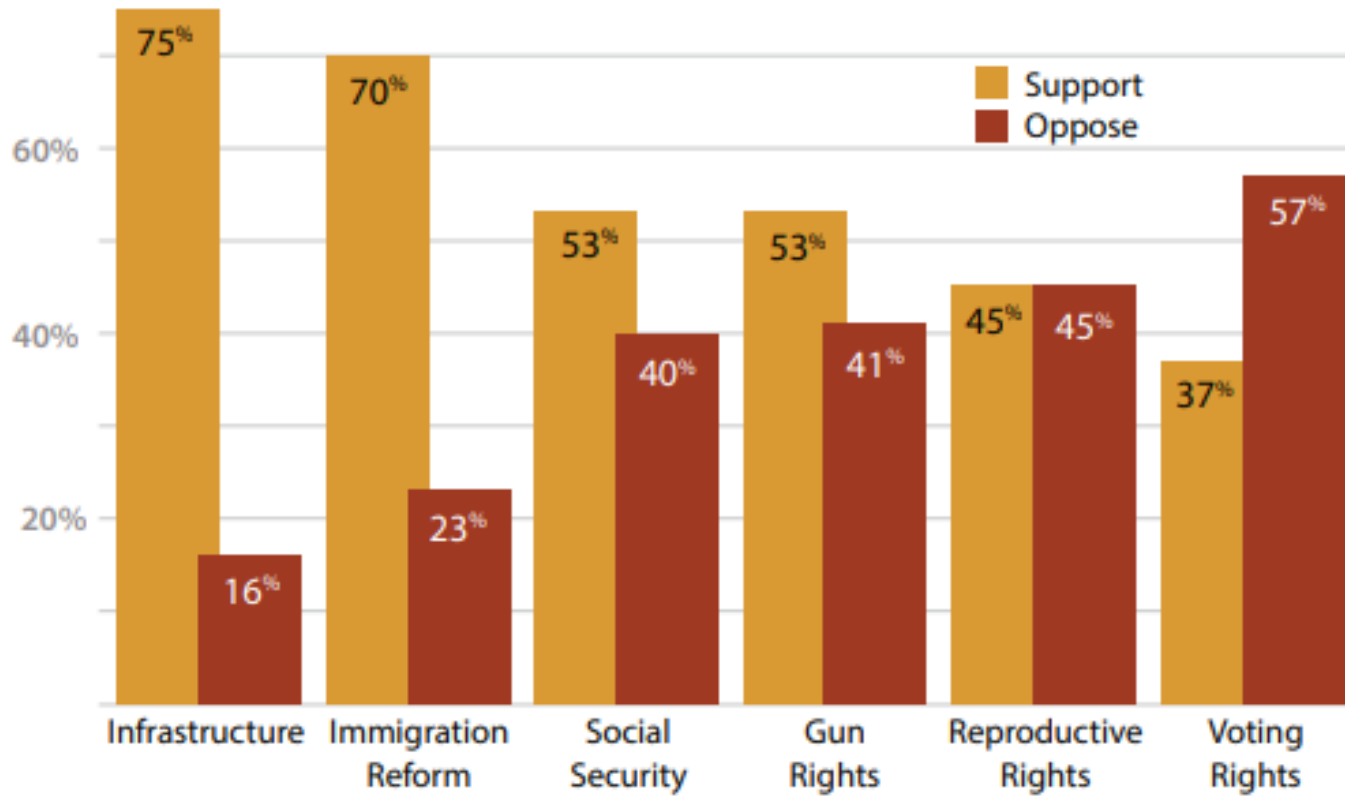


American Bar Association (ABA) Survey of Civic Literacy, 2023

# What People Want!

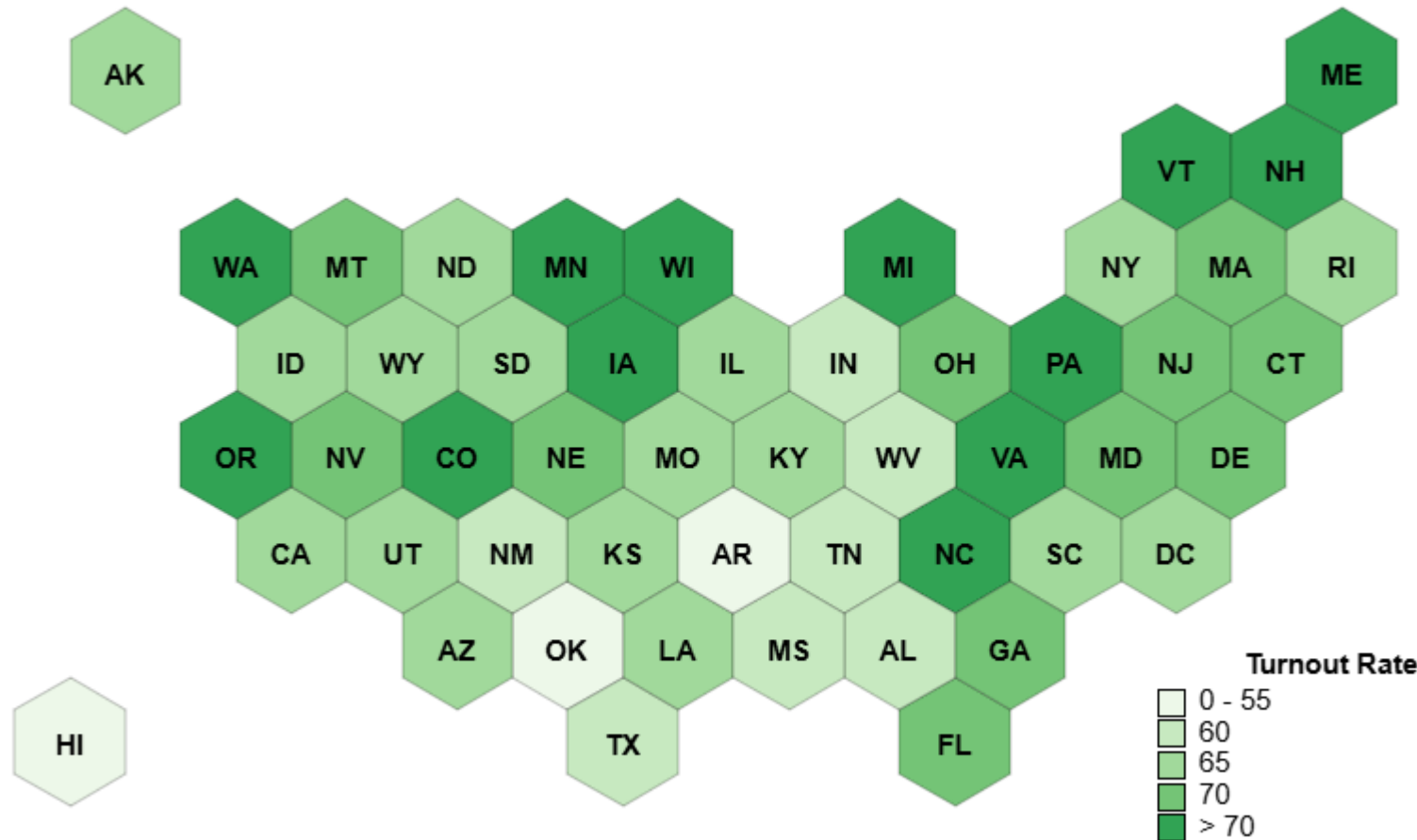


What issue would you be willing to see your elected officials compromise on?



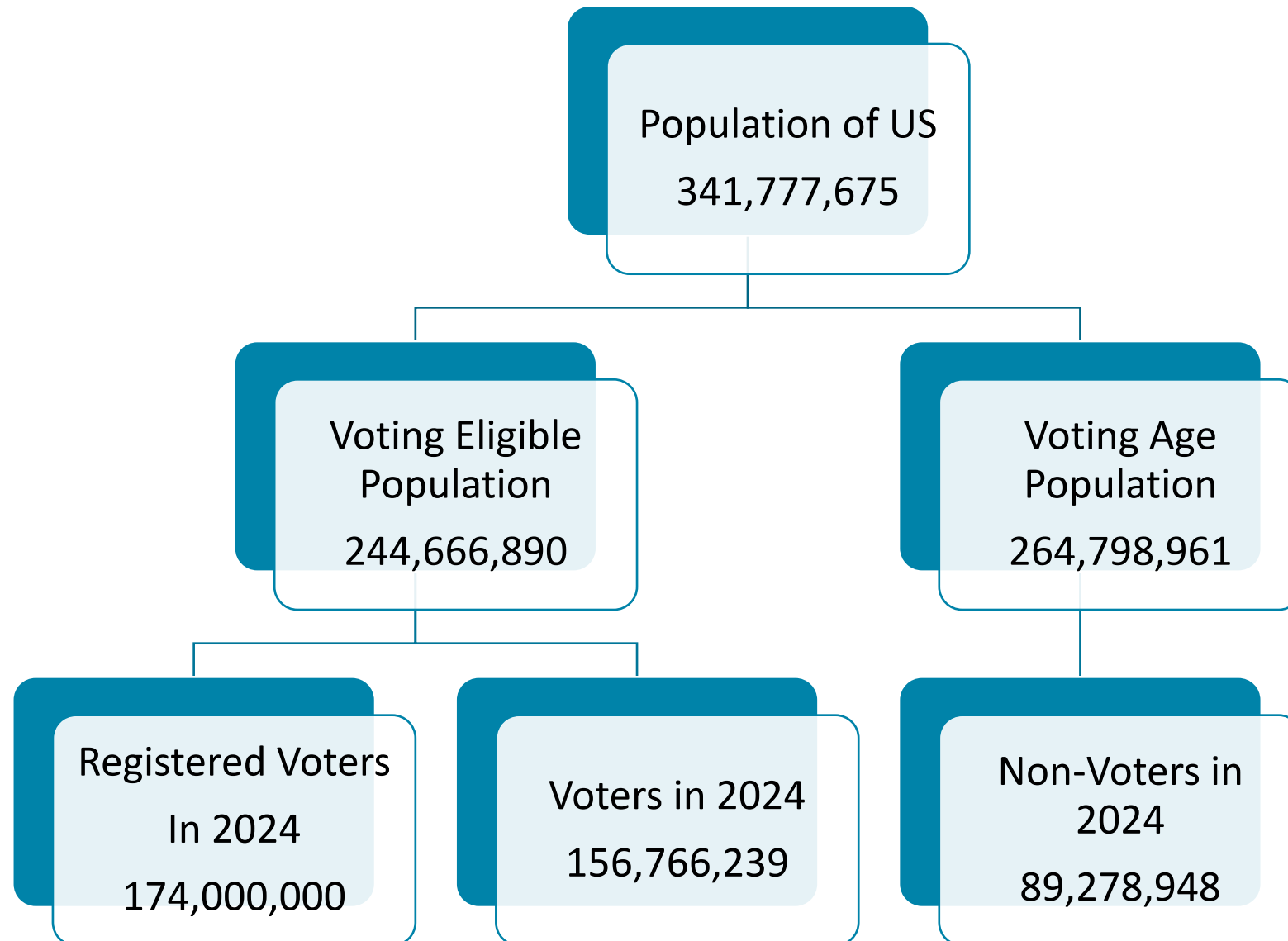
American Bar Association (ABA) Survey of Civic Literacy, 2023

# Voter Turnout Rate 2024



Created by the UF Election Lab ([election.lab.ufl.edu](http://election.lab.ufl.edu))

# Voter Turnout Rate 2024



# Skill and Knowledge gaps

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Gap 1 – Identify evidence to support inferences

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Gap 2 – Sequence of events

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Gap 3 – Compare differing ideas

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Gap 4 – Discrepancies between sources

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Gap 5 – Content knowledge

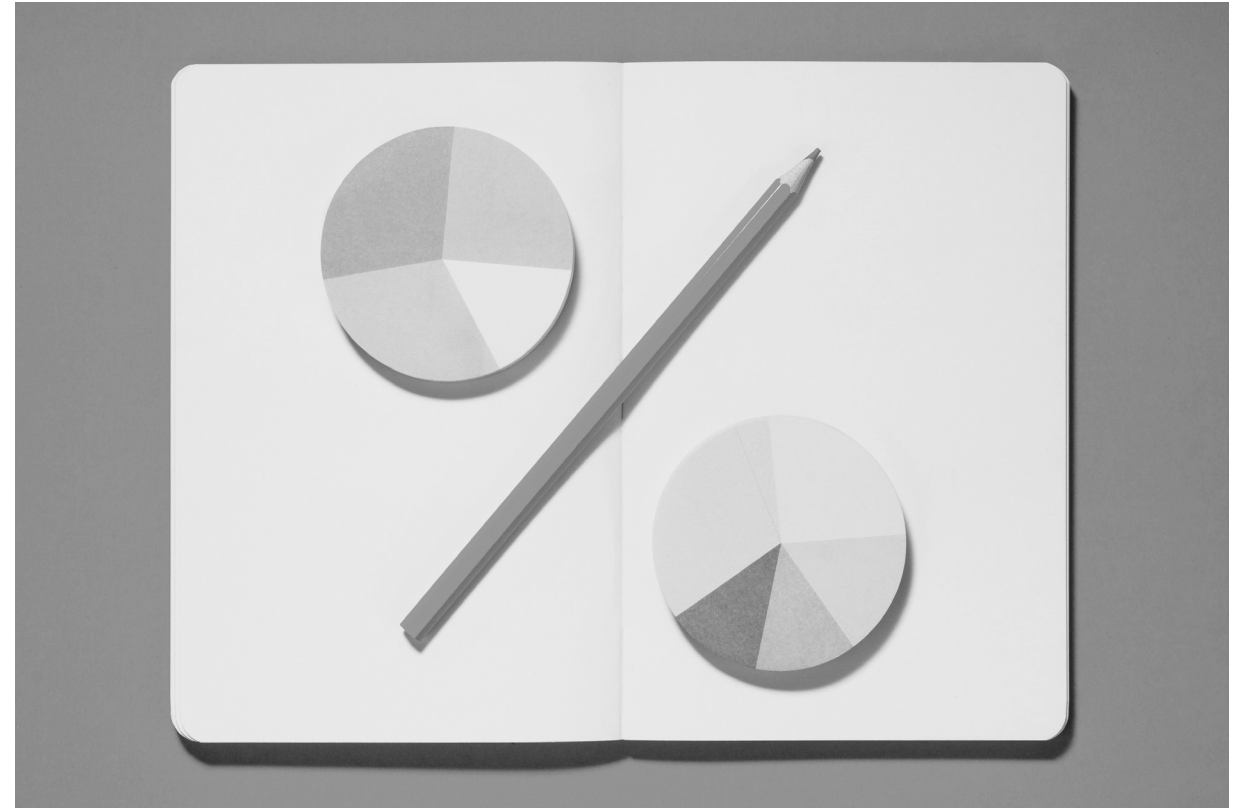
# What is a skills gap?

A gap is the difference between the actual performance and the expected performance.

- When student performance on a skill does not match what is expected, such as a straightforward skill that students seem to answer incorrectly.
- Or a common skill that is difficult but that students could answer correctly with more instruction.
- Guidance and clarification on these skills could help students improve their overall performance.

# Possible Reasons for Gaps

- ▶ The students may need to improve their critical thinking and/or reading skills.
- ▶ *Students may need additional instruction on skills identified as gaps and on specific knowledge in content topics during GED® test preparation.*
- ▶ Students tend to underperform on certain items simply because the concepts are difficult.





# Content Knowledge

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Test questions assume students have a basic understanding of the social studies subject matter and terminology used in the content topics and indicators.

## The gap:

- Civics/Government
- Economics



# Gap 2 Example #2

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Which list shows the correct order of steps in a process used by U.S. government branches to check each other?

- A. Congress passes a bill; the president vetoes the bill; Congress overrides the veto; the bill becomes law
- B. Congress passes a bill; the president vetoes the bill; the Supreme Court declares the veto unconstitutional
- C. the president nominates a Supreme Court justice; the Senate does not confirm the president's nominee; the Supreme Court declares the Senate's decision unconstitutional
- D. the president issues an executive order; the Supreme Court declares the order unconstitutional; the president vetoes the Court decision; the executive order stands

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| Focusing Themes   | Social Studies Topic Matrix  |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
|   | <b>CG: Civics and Government (50%)</b>   | <b>USH: U.S. History (20%)</b>  | <b>E: Economics (15%)</b>  | <b>G: Geography and the World (15%)</b>   |
| <b>I. Development of Modern Liberties and Democracy</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Types of modern and historical governments</li> <li>b. Principles that have contributed to development of American constitutional democracy</li> <li>c. Structure and design of United States government</li> <li>d. Individual rights and civic responsibilities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Key historical documents that have shaped American constitutional government</li> <li>b. Revolutionary and Early Republic Periods</li> <li>c. Civil War &amp; Reconstruction</li> <li>d. Civil Rights Movement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Key economic events that have shaped American government and policies</li> <li>b. Relationship between political and economic freedoms</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Development of classic civilizations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>II. Dynamic Responses in Societal Systems</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Political parties, campaigns, and elections in American politics</li> <li>f. Contemporary public policy</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. European population of the Americas</li> <li>f. World War I &amp; II</li> <li>g. The Cold War</li> <li>h. American foreign policy since 9/11</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Fundamental economic concepts</li> <li>d. Microeconomics and macroeconomics</li> <li>e. Consumer economics</li> <li>f. Economic causes and impacts of wars</li> <li>g. Economic drivers of exploration and colonization</li> <li>h. Scientific and Industrial Revolutions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Relationships between the environment and societal development</li> <li>c. Borders between peoples and nations</li> <li>d. Human migration</li> </ul> |

| Civics and Government |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| CG.a                  | <b>Types of modern and historical governments</b><br>CG.a.1 Direct democracy, representative democracy, parliamentary democracy, presidential democracy, monarchy and others types of government that contributed to the development of American constitutional democracy  |
| CG.b                  | <b>Principles that have contributed to development of American constitutional democracy</b><br>CG.b.1 Natural rights philosophy<br>CG.b.2 Popular sovereignty and consent of the governed<br>CG.b.3 Constitutionalism<br>CG.b.4 Majority rule and minority rights<br>CG.b.5 Checks and balances<br>CG.b.6 Separation of powers<br>CG.b.7 Rule of law<br>CG.b.8 Individual rights<br>CG.b.9 Federalism  |
| CG.c                  | <b>Structure and design of United States government</b><br>CG.c.1 Structure, powers, and authority of the federal executive, judicial, and legislative branches<br>CG.c.2 Individual governmental positions (e.g. president, speaker of the house, cabinet secretary, etc.)<br>CG.c.3 Major powers and responsibilities of the federal and state governments<br>CG.c.4 Shared powers<br>CG.c.5 The amendment process<br>CG.c.6 Governmental departments and agencies |
| CG.d                  | <b>Individual rights and civic responsibilities</b><br>CG.d.1 The Bill of Rights<br>CG.d.2 Personal and civil liberties of citizens  |
| CG.e                  | <b>Political parties, campaigns, and elections in American politics</b><br>CG.e.1 Political parties<br>CG.e.2 Interest groups<br>CG.e.3 Political campaigns, elections and the electoral process   |
| CG.f                  | <b>Contemporary Public Policy</b>  |

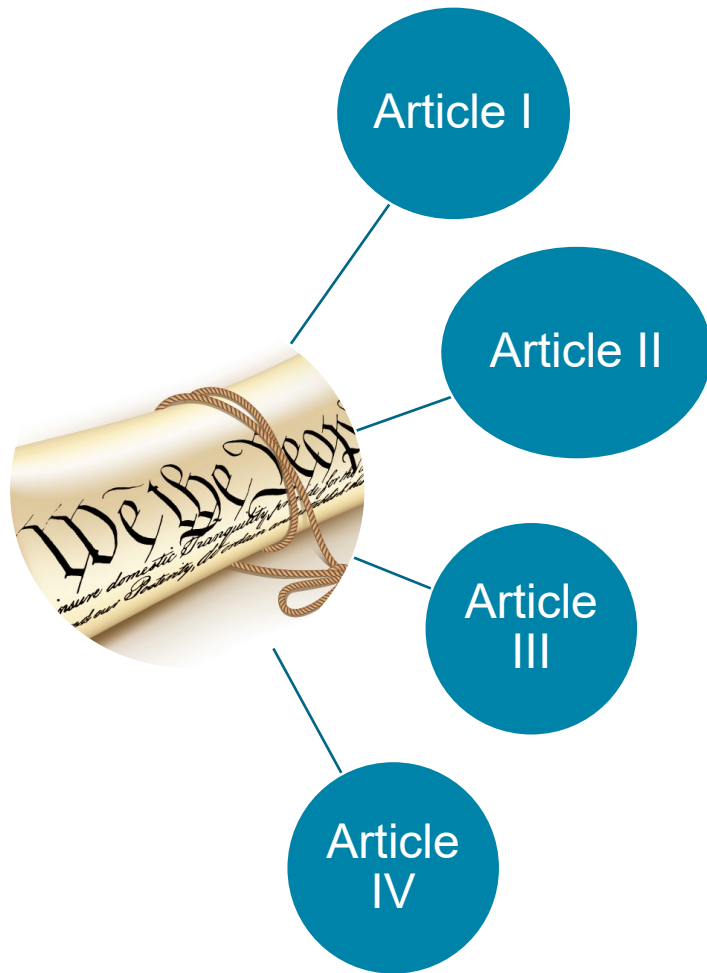
# What is the Difference?

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| Characteristics | Constitution   | Bill of Rights   |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Meaning         | Fundamental principles and established precedents a state, organization, or any other entity has passed to be followed.  | A formal declaration or assertion of the legal and civil rights that citizens of any country enjoy                     |
| Functions       | Outlines how government arms function, basic rules civil officials should follow, and rights and limitations of citizens | Lists the rights every citizen is entitled to and how the government and other people should protect them              |
| Entity          | An independent body housing different rules  | Is housed by the constitution<br> |

# Explore the Basics

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Congress

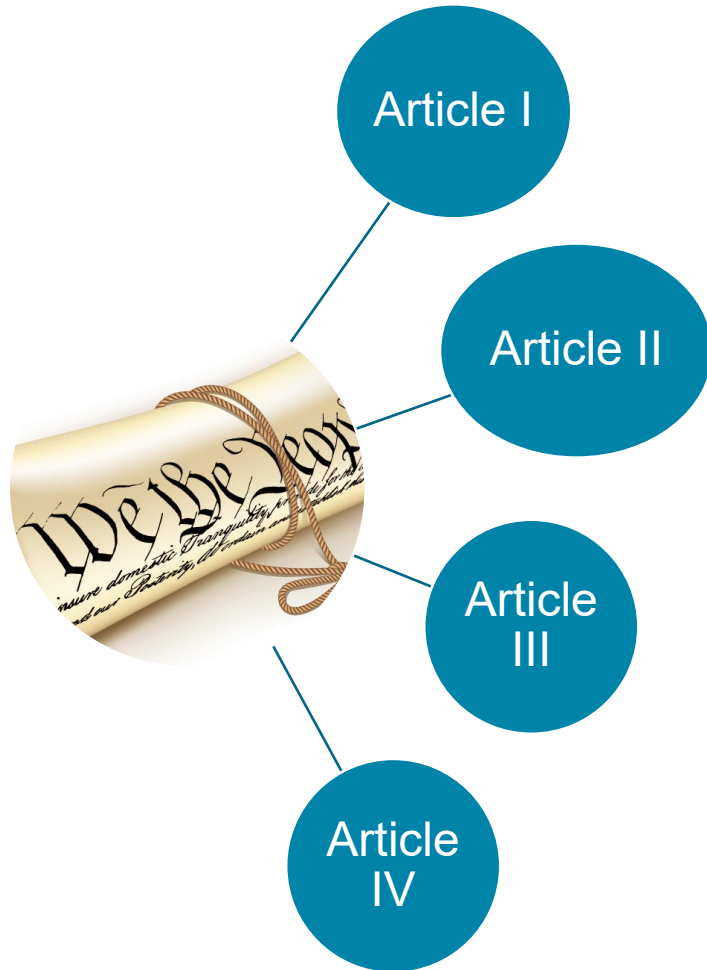
President

Courts

States

# Explore the Basics

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Coin Money  
Establish the Budget  
Regulate Commerce  
Declare war and support an army and navy  
Make other laws to carry out powers

Act as Commander-in-Chief  
Maintain cabinet of advisers  
Negotiate treaties  
Appoint Supreme Court Justices  
Execute laws

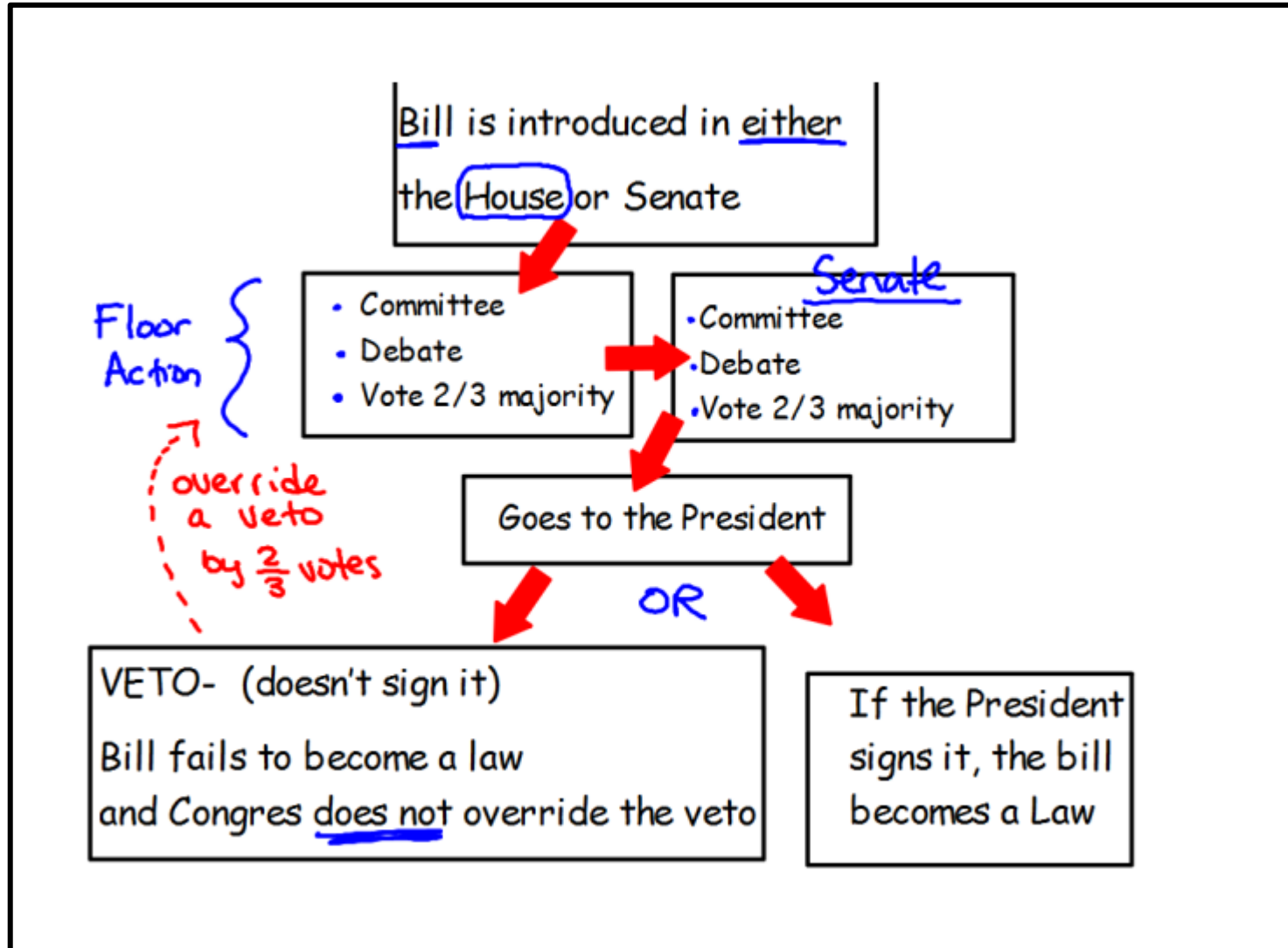
Interpret the meaning of laws  
Decide whether a law is relevant to a particular set of facts  
Rule on how a law should be applied  
Determine whether a law is constitutional

Create and enforce their own laws  
Respect laws of other states  
Extradite criminals  
Have a representative government  
Follow "supreme law of the land"



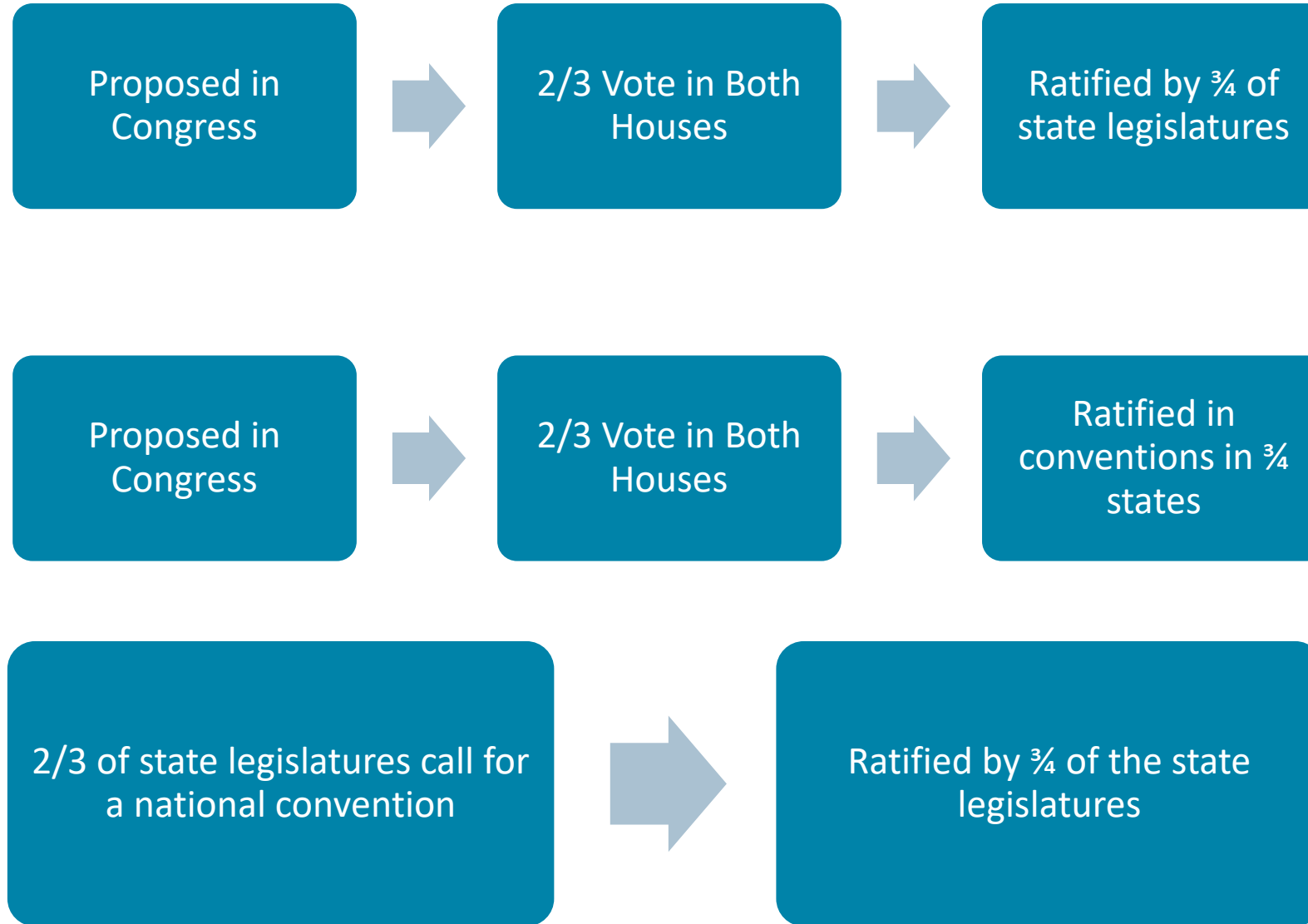
# From Bill to Law

23



# Amending the Constitution

24



# What are my rights?

25

|                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| <b>Amendment 1</b> | <b>(5)</b> |
| Amendment 2        | (1)        |
| Amendment 3        | (1)        |
| Amendment 4        | (1)        |
| Amendment 5        | (5)        |
| Amendment 6        | (5)        |
| Amendment 7        | (1)        |
| Amendment 8        | (1)        |
| Amendment 9        | (1)        |
| Amendment 10       | (1)        |

*“If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable.”*

– Justice William J. Brennan  
Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, 1956-1990

# What are my rights?

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|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Amendment 1</b> | <b>(5) Freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly, petition the government</b>   |
| Amendment 2        | (1) Right to keep and bear arms  |
| Amendment 3        | (1) Protection against housing soldiers without owner's permission   |
| Amendment 4        | (1) Protection against unreasonable search and seizure   |
| Amendment 5        | (5) Right to be indicted by a grand jury, protection against double jeopardy, right against self-incrimination, right of due process, just compensation if government takes property |
| Amendment 6        | (5) Right to speedy trial, right to an impartial jury, right to be informed of criminal charges, right to be confronted by adverse witnesses, right to assistance of counsel         |
| Amendment 7        | (1) Right to a jury trial in federal civil cases   |
| Amendment 8        | (1) Protection against cruel and unusual punishment  |
| Amendment 9        | (1) People have other rights that are not specified in the Constitution  |
| Amendment 10       | (1) Any power not listed is left to the states or the people   |

## RIGHTS

### Bill of Rights

- Life, Liberty, and Property
- Freedom of Religion
- Freedom of Speech and Press
- Right to Bear Arms
- Right to Assemble and Petition
- Right to Trial by Jury
- Protection from Unreasonable Searches and Seizures

## RESPONSIBILITIES

**Vote**



**Pay Taxes**



**Obey Laws**

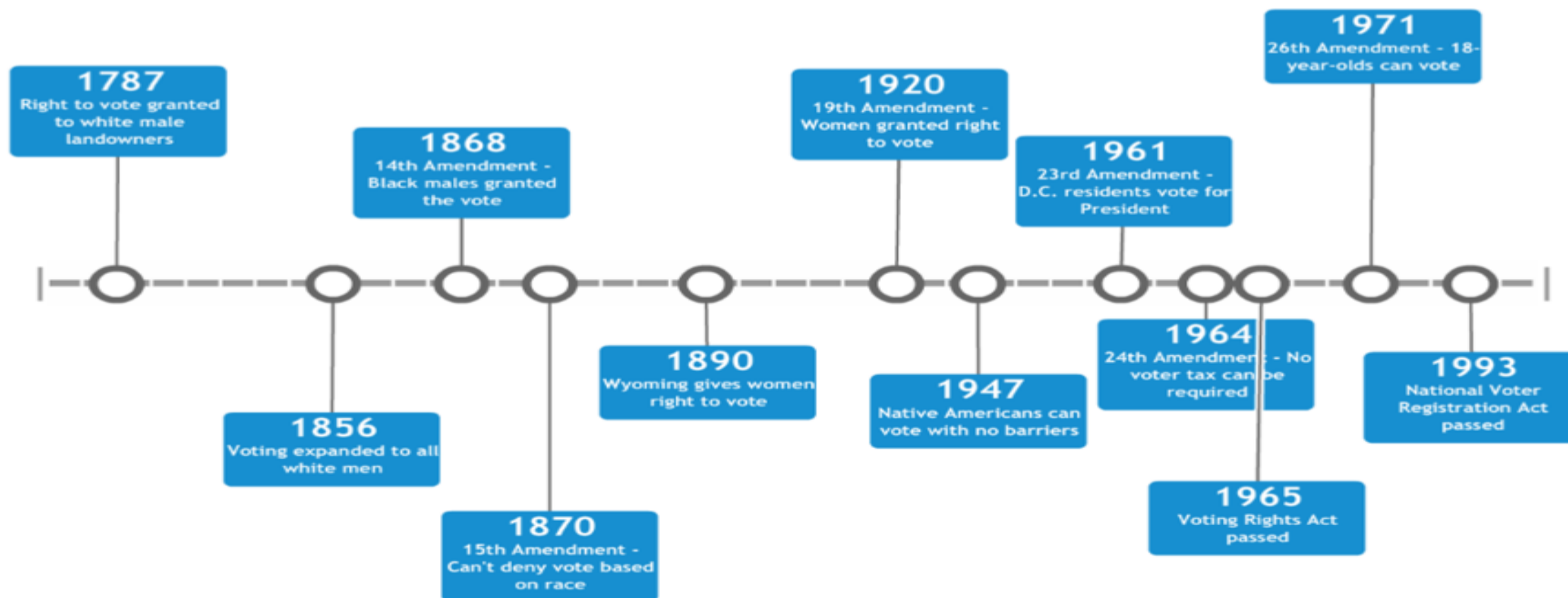


**Serve on Jury**

# TIMELINE

## Voting Rights

By: SKPittman





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Welcome to [ConstitutionFacts.com](#) where you'll see the entire text of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence - and much more! You'll find interesting insights into the men who wrote the Constitution, how it was created, and how the Supreme Court has interpreted the United States Constitution in the two centuries since its creation.

The Constitution is certainly the most influential legal document in existence. Since its creation some two hundred years ago, over one hundred countries around the world have used it as a model for their own. And it is a living document. It is one of the world's oldest surviving constitutions. And, while the Supreme Court continually interprets the U.S. Constitution so as to reflect a rapidly changing world, its basic tenets have remained virtually unchanged since its inception, and unchallenged as well. People quarrel over its interpretation, but never do they question the wisdom of its underlying principles.

At ConstitutionFacts.com, you'll begin to see why. You'll get a taste of some of the Founding Fathers' thoughts. You'll see some of the reasoning behind the Supreme Court's landmark decisions. But, most importantly, you'll get a feel for the United States Constitution itself and how it is that a document that was written over 200 years ago still plays an integral role in our everyday lives.



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The Constitution The Drafting Table Media Library In the Classroom

# The Constitution

Beginning with the iconic phrase, "We the People," the U.S. Constitution is composed of the Preamble, seven articles, and 27 amendments to the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights—the first 10 amendments.

[Read the Full Text](#) | [More about the Constitution](#)

**ARTICLES**

Preamble  
We the People

Article I  
Legislative Branch

Section 1: Congress  
Section 2: The House of Representatives  
Section 3: The Senate  
Section 4: Elections  
Section 5: Powers and Duties of Congress  
Section 6: Rights and Disabilities of Members  
Section 7: Legislative Process  
Section 8: Powers of Congress  
Section 9: Powers Denied Congress  
Section 10: Powers Denied to the States

Article II  
Executive Branch

Article III  
Judicial Branch

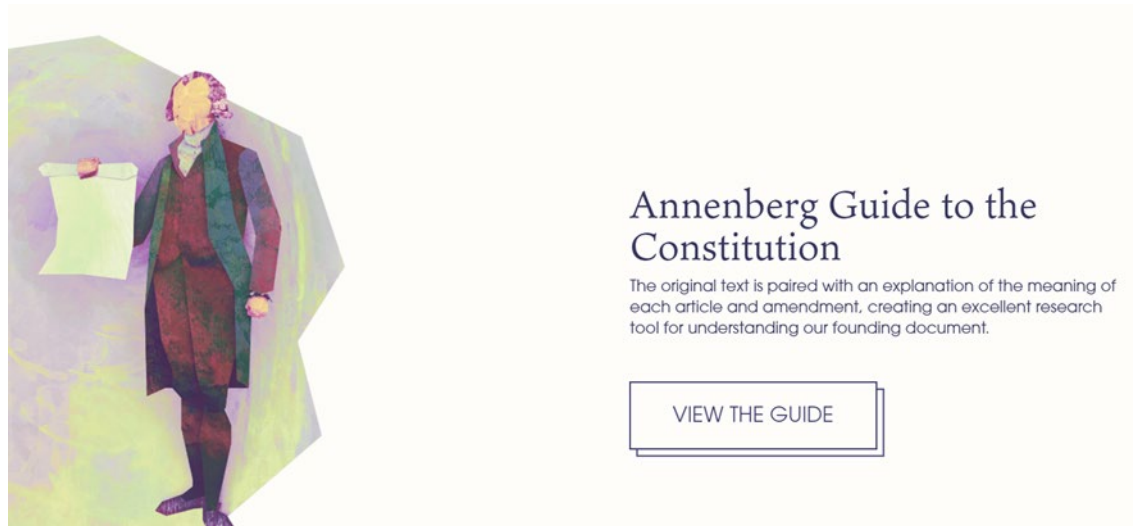
Article IV  
States, Citizenship, New States

Article V  
Amendment Process

Article VI  
Debts, Supremacy, Oaths, Religious Tests

Article VII  
Ratification

<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/the-constitution>



<http://www.annenbergclassroom.org>

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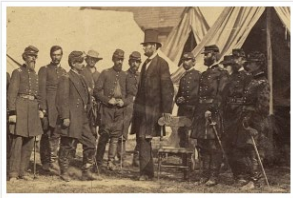
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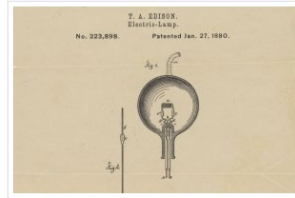
Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)



Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)



Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)



The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)



The Emergence of Modern America



The Great Depression and World War

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# Content Knowledge – Access Online Resources

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<http://sheg.stanford.edu/?q=node/21>

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## General Strategies

- Share the GED® indicators and content topics with your students. The content topics can be used as a teaching/study guide.
- Review key foundational concepts/content.
- Remind students to carefully read the questions and excerpts.
- Encourage students to study key definitions and terms.
- Encourage students to read more. Strong reading skills will benefit students in all 4 subject area tests.
- Encourage students to analyze the content they read on a daily basis. Strong critical thinking skills will benefit students in all 4 subject area tests.







**GED**  
TESTING SERVICE®

# SAVE THE DATE

## 2025 GED Annual Conference

# August 4-6, 2025 • Chicago, IL

Register for the GED Annual Conference at [GED.com/gedconference2025](https://GED.com/gedconference2025)

# News

## ***CT Turner President of GED Testing Service***



May 2025



### **Leadership Announcement: CT Turner Appointed President of GEDTS**

We are thrilled to share that CT Turner has been appointed  
President of GED Testing Service, effective immediately.

[Read More](#)





# Hot Topic



## GED® Grad Day is May 16!

Join the GED Grad Day virtual celebration on May 16 at 1 PM ET as we honor the hard work and achievements of GED grads. Encourage your students to share their stories, connect with fellow grads, and join the online ceremony.

[Learn More](#)



## Did you catch GED on National TV?

GED partnered with *Empowered*, hosted by Meg Ryan for a national public television segment that highlights the life-changing power of earning a GED. This is national recognition of the work you do for learners!

[Check it out!](#)

# Thank you!

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Adora Beard – [adora.beard@ged.com](mailto:adora.beard@ged.com)

Susan Pittman – [skptvs@gmail.com](mailto:skptvs@gmail.com)