

A word cloud of political and social terms. The largest word is 'Rights' in a bold, yellow-green font. Other prominent words include 'Culture', 'Propaganda', 'Economics', 'Citizenship', 'Veto', 'Responsibilities', 'Voting', 'Constitution', 'Speech', 'Cabinet', 'Duties', 'Globalization', 'Roots', 'Executive', 'President', 'Bill', 'Judicial', 'Amendments', 'People', 'Laws', 'Right', 'Civil', 'Elections', 'Government', 'Branches', 'Democracy', 'Citizens', 'Congress', 'Civics', 'ggovernment', 'Geography', 'Free', and 'Branches'. The words are arranged in a roughly triangular shape, pointing to the right, with varying colors including red, purple, green, and black.

МИНИСТЕРСТВО НАУКИ И ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ РФ

**Федеральное государственное автономное
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«Национальный исследовательский Нижегородский государственный
университет им. Н.И. Лобачевского»**

THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM

Учебно-методическое пособие

Рекомендовано методической комиссией Института международных отношений и мировой истории для студентов ННГУ, обучающихся по направлениям подготовки 41.03.05 «Международные отношения», 41.03.01 «Зарубежное регионоведение», 41.03.04 «Политология»

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Данное учебно-методическое пособие предназначено для студентов III-IV курсов института международных отношений и мировой истории, обучающихся по направлениям подготовки «Международные отношения», «Зарубежное регионоведение» и «Политология» изучающих английский язык как основной.

Пособие может быть использовано как в аудиторной работе, так и для самостоятельной подготовки студентов.

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Введение

Учебно-методическое пособие представляет собой тематический сборник текстов общественно-политической направленности по государственно-политической системе США.

Цель пособия – обучение чтению специальной литературы и анализу текста, развитие речевых навыков подготовленной и спонтанной речи, умений вести беседу и делать развернутые сообщения в рамках предлагаемого тематического материала, развитие навыков аудирования аутентичной речи, а также творческого письма.

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Новый политико-ориентированный курс английского языка содержит наиболее употребительные слова и словосочетания, составляющие необходимый минимум политической лексики для свободного устного и письменного общения в сфере внутренней и внешней политики США. Данные тексты обеспечивают не только ориентированную языковую подготовку учащихся, но и вводят их в проблематику современного политического устройства США.

I. The beginning of the US Constitution

In the **Treaty of Paris** signed in **1783** Britain officially recognized her former colonies as independent nation. The treaty granted the new United States all of North America from Canada to Florida in the South, and from the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi River. But it was not one nation as it is today. In 1783 most Americans felt more loyalty to their own state than to the whole of the US. They saw themselves as Virginians or New Yorkers rather than as Americans. Each individual state had its own government and behaved like an independent country; it made its own laws and decisions about how to run its affairs. The first big problem was how to join together these little countries into one united nation.

During the War of Independence the states had agreed to work together in a national Congress to which each state sent representatives. The agreement that set up this plan for the states to cooperate was called **the Articles of Confederation** which had begun to operate in **1781**. Under the Articles of Confederation the central government was very weak. It was given certain rights but it had no power to make those rights effective. Congress could vote to set up a US army or navy, but it could only obtain soldiers and sailors by asking the states for them. It could vote to spend money, but it had no power to collect taxes to raise the money. The weakness of the US government made it difficult for the new country to win the respect or the help of foreign nations.

It was clear that for the US to survive there would have to be changes in the Articles of Confederation. In February 1787, Congress asked each state to send delegates to a meeting or “convention”, in Philadelphia to talk about such changes. The meeting became known as **the Constitutional Convention**; it began in May **1787**, and 55 men attended. They chose George Washington to lead their discussions.

The original purpose of the Constitutional Convention was simply to revise the Articles of Confederation. But the delegates did more than this. They started afresh and worked out a completely new system of government for the United States. They set out the plan for this government in a document called **the Constitution of the United States**. The Constitution gave the United States a "federal" system of government. A federal system is one in which the power to rule is shared. A central or federal, authority has some of it and the rest is in the hands of local authorities in the separate regions that make up the country.

The new Constitution still left the individual state governments with a wide range of powers. But it made the federal government much stronger than before. It gave it the power to collect taxes, to organize armed forces, to make treaties with foreign countries and to control trade of all kinds. The Constitution made

arrangements for the election of *a national leader called the President* to take charge of the federal government. He would head the "*executive*" side of the nation's government. It would be his job to run the country's everyday affairs and to see that people obeyed the laws.

The law-making, or "*legislative*", powers of the federal government were given to a *Congress*. This was made up of representatives elected by the people. Congress was to consist of two parts, *the Senate and the House of Representatives*. In the Senate each state would be equally represented, with two members, whatever the size of its population. The number of representatives a state had in the House of Representatives, however, would depend upon its population.

Finally, the Constitution set up a *Supreme Court* to control the "*judicial*" part of the nation's government. The job of the Supreme Court was to make decisions in any disagreements about the meaning of the laws and the Constitution.

1. Match the words and the definitions

a. obtain	1 agreement (between countries)
b. constitutional	2 groups of people or other living things
c. colonies	3 get
d. judicial	4 hard for
e. obeyed	5 people who do things for other people
g. legislative	6 agreeing with, or related to, the Constitution
h. afresh	7 again
i. difficult for	8 people in charge
j. executive	9 the part of a government which takes decisions on policy
k. delegates	10 law-related
l. authorities	11 exactly followed the
n. treaty	12 law-based

2. Complete the following sentences with the vocabulary from Ex.1:

1. Only the president has the ... to declare war.
2. Nobody seemed to know whether the President's action was ... or not.
3. All citizens must have confidence in the ... system.
4. The peace ... ends nearly four years of violence.
5. He moved to America to start
6. You will need to ... permission from the principal.
7. The U.S. president has no ... power, but he can make recommendations.

8. The President made an appeal for stronger ... powers to implement his economic reforms.

3. Say what these dates refer to and reproduce the sentences with them from the text:

1781; 1783; 1787

4. Answer the questions:

1. What document was the Articles of Confederation?
2. What importance did the Treaty of Paris have?
3. What challenge did the new nation face?
4. What decision was made in February 1787? Why?
5. What new changes did the Constitution introduce?

II. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights

The Constitution went into effect in **March 1789**. But it was still not really complete. In 1791 ten amendments, or additions, were made to it. Together these ten amendments are called the Bill of Rights. The reason for the Bill of Rights was that the original Constitution had said nothing about the rights and freedoms of individual citizens. The Bill of Rights altered this. It promised all Americans freedom of religion, free press, free speech, the right of peaceful assembly, and the right to petition the government to correct wrongs, the right to carry arms, the right to a fair trial by jury, and protection against "cruel and unusual punishments"... Other rights guarded the citizens against unreasonable searches, arrests, and seizures of property, and established a system of justice guaranteeing orderly legal procedures. They are stated in the first ten Constitutional Amendments, what they considered to be the fundamental rights of any American. In this way, Americans first took for themselves the liberties and rights that elsewhere were the privileges of an elite few.

The great pride Americans have in their Constitution, their almost religious respect for it comes from the knowledge that these ideals, freedoms, and rights were not given to them by a small ruling class. Rather, they are seen as the natural "unalienable" rights of every American, which had been fought for and won. They cannot be taken away by any government, court, official, or law.

The federal and state governments formed under the Constitution, therefore, were designed to serve the people and to carry out their majority wishes (and not the other way around). One thing they did not want their government to do is to rule them. Americans expect their government to serve them and tend to think of politicians and governmental officials as their servants. This attitude remains very strong among Americans today.

Over the past two centuries, the Constitution has also had considerable influence outside the United States. Several other nations have based their own forms of government on it. It is interesting to note that Lafayette, a hero of the American Revolution, drafted the French declaration of rights when he returned to France. And the United Nations Charter also has clear echoes of what once was considered a revolutionary document.

1. Complete the following text with suitable words or phrases from the text above.

When the Constitution was written in 1787, there were only 13 states. Because the (a) _____ of the Constitution saw that the future might bring a need for changes,

they (b) _____ a method of adding (c) _____. Over the years 26 amendments have been added, but the basic (d) _____ has not been (e) _____. The pattern of government planned so long ago for 13 states today meets the needs of 50 states and more than 57 times as many people. The first 10 amendments to the Constitution, called the (f) _____ assure individual (g) _____ and (h) _____. Added in 1791, they include provisions for freedom of the (i) _____ and of (j) _____; the right of citizens to (k) _____ peacefully; the right to be (l) _____ in one's own home against unreasonable (m) _____ and (n) _____ of person or property; and the right of any person charged with (o) _____ the law to have a speedy trial by a (p) _____ of fellow (q) _____.

The Constitution (r) _____ the powers of the government into three branches: the (s) _____ headed by the (t) _____; the (u) _____, which _____ includes both houses of (v) _____ (the Senate and the House of Representatives) and the (w) _____ which is headed by the Supreme Court. The Constitution limits the roles of each (x) _____ to prevent any one branch from gaining undue (y) _____.

2. Find in the text the English equivalents for the expressions below:

1. вносить поправки в конституцию;
2. пересмотреть документ;
3. действовать в соответствии с соглашением;
4. свобода совести;
5. управлять своими собственными делами;
6. принять конституцию;
7. определить чьи-либо полномочия;
8. действовать в рамках конституции;
9. получить необоснованно большую власть;
10. незаконный арест;
11. свобода собраний;
12. захват собственности;
13. удовлетворять требованиям.

3. Answer the questions.

1. How does the American Constitution separate the powers of the government?
2. Has the text of the Constitution ever been changed? How did it become possible?
3. Does any governmental organ or official in the US have the ultimate power? Why?
4. What is the Bill of Rights?

4. Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

1. What is the difference between the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights?
2. What is the difference between the constitutions of the UK and the US?

5. Make a list of features of the American Constitution which you consider the most important and compare them with the Constitution of your country.

III. The system of government

The governmental systems in the United States - federal, state, county, and local - are quite easy to understand, that is, if you grew up with them and studied them in school. One foreign expert complained, for example, that the complexity of just the cities' political and governmental structure is "almost unbelievable." The "real Chicago," he explained, "spreads over 2 states, 6 counties, 10 towns, 30 cities, 49 townships, and 110 villages. Overlaid upon this complex pattern are 235 tax districts and more than 400 school districts..."

There are, however, several basic principles which are found at all levels of American government. One of these is the "one person, one vote" principle which says that legislators are elected from geographical districts directly by the voters. Under this principle, all election districts must have about the same number of residents.

Another fundamental principle of American government is that because of the system of checks and balances, compromise in politics is a matter of necessity, not choice. For example, the House of Representatives controls spending and finance, so the President must have its agreement for his proposals and programmes. He cannot declare war, either, without the approval of Congress. In foreign affairs, he is also strongly limited. Any treaty must first be approved by the Senate. If there is no approval, there's no treaty. The rule is "the President proposes, but Congress disposes." What a President wants to do, therefore, is often a different thing from what a President is able to do.

1. Complete the following text with the words and phrases from the text using them in the appropriate form.

to divide; to be based on; to track down; to manage; to follow; to deal with; to warrant; to provide; to cross; to be put; to break; to be enforced; to be established; to involve; to be presented.

The whole system of American government a) _____ the principles b) _____ in the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The people believe that the government should c) _____ a framework of law and order in which they are left free to run their own lives. The state governments d) _____ much the same pattern as the federal government. Each has a governor as the chief executive, with power e) _____ among the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches. State governments f) _____ such affairs as maintaining order, educating children and young adults, and building highways. The federal government g) _____ national problems and international relations and with regional problems that h) _____ more than one state. Laws affecting the daily

lives of citizens i) _____ by police in the cities and towns. Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation - the famous FBI - j) _____ criminals who k) _____ state borders or who l) _____ federal laws. Before an accused person can m) _____ on trial for a serious crime in a federal court - or in the courts of many states - the case must n) _____ o) _____ to a grand jury of private citizens who decide whether there is enough evidence of probable guilt p) _____ a trial.

2. Find in the texts the English equivalents for the following words and expressions.

1. избиратель
2. избирательный округ
3. объявлять войну
4. законодатель
5. международный договор
6. одобрение Конгресса
7. внешняя политика
8. глава исполнительной власти
9. проводить в жизнь закон
10. поддерживать правопорядок
11. выслеживать преступников
12. быть строго ограниченным
13. представить дело на рассмотрение жюри присяжных заседателей

3. Answer the questions.

1. What are the basic principles which are found at all levels of American government?
2. How do you understand the saying: "The President proposes, but Congress disposes"?
3. Who is the chief executive in each state?
4. What laws do the local police enforce?

4. Read the text "Congress"

Congress, the legislative branch of the federal government, is made up of **the Senate and the House of Representatives**. There are 100 Senators, two from each state. One third of the Senators are elected every two years for six-year terms of office. The Senators represent all of the people in a state and their interests.

The House has 435 members. They are elected every two years for two-year terms. They represent the population of "congressional districts" into which each state is divided. The number of Representatives from each state is based upon its population. For instance, California, the state with the largest population, has 45 Representatives, while Delaware has one. There is no limit to the number of terms a Senator or a Representative may serve.

Almost all elections in the United States follow the "winner-take-all" principle: the candidate who wins the largest number of votes in a Congressional district is the winner. Congress makes all laws, and each house of Congress has the power to introduce legislation. Each can also vote against legislation passed by the other. Because legislation only becomes law if both houses agree, compromise between them is necessary. Congress decides upon taxes and how money is spent. In addition, it regulates commerce among the states and with foreign countries. It also sets rules for the naturalization of foreign citizens.

5. Complete the following text by translating the words and expressions in brackets

The (законодательная ветвь) - (конгресс) - consists of the (Сенат) and the (Палата Представителей). Each (сенатор) is elected for six years and each (представитель) for two years, with no limitation on the number of (сроков).

Each of the 50 states elects two (сенатор) under a system in which one-third of the (Сенат) is elected every two years. A (сенатор) must be (старше) 30 years old and must have been an American citizen for (но меньшей мере) nine years.

The (Палата Представителей) has 435 members. Each state is divided into congressional districts of roughly (равное) population, and the (избиратели) of each district elect one (представитель) to (Конгресс). A member must be (старше) 25 years of age and must have been an American citizen for at least seven years.

Both (палата) of (Конгресс) must (одобрить) bills before they become law. The (Сенат) alone (утверждает) the President's (кандидаты) for high-level official positions and (ратифицирует) treaties with other nations.

6. Read the text "The President and federal Departments"

The President of the United States is elected every four years to a four-year term of office, with no more than two full terms allowed. As is true with Senators and Representatives, the President is elected directly by the voters (through state electors). In other words, the political party with the most Senators and

Representatives does not choose the President. This means that the President can be from one party and the majority of those in the House of Representatives or Senate (or both) from another. This is not uncommon.

Thus, although one of the parties may win a majority in the midterm elections (those held every two years), the President remains President, even though his party may not have a majority in either house. Such a result could easily hurt his ability to get legislation through Congress, which must pass all laws, but this is not necessarily so. In any case, the President's policies must be approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate before they can become law. In domestic as well as in foreign policy, the President can seldom count upon the automatic support of Congress, even when his own party has a majority in both the Senate and the House. Therefore, he must be able to convince Congressmen, the Representatives and Senators, of his point of view. He must bargain and compromise. This is a major difference between the American system and those in which the nation's leader represents the majority party or parties, i.e. parliamentary systems.

Within the Executive Branch, there are a number of executive departments. Currently these are the departments of State, Treasury, Defence, Justice, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labour, Health and Human Resources, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, Energy, and Education. Each department is established by law, and, as their names indicate, each is responsible for a specific area. The head of each department is appointed by the President. These appointments, however, must be approved by the Senate. None of these Secretaries, as the department heads are usually called, can also be serving in Congress or in another part of the government. Each is directly responsible to the President and only serves as long as the President wants him or her to. They can best be seen, therefore, as Presidential assistants and advisers. When they meet together, they are termed "the President's Cabinet." Some Presidents have relied quite a bit on their Cabinets for advice and some very little.

7. For each word and phrase write the number of the matching definition

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| a. compromise | 1 people who vote |
| b. advice | 2 most |
| c. currently | 3 unusual/amazing |
| d. thus | 4 so |
| e. commerce | 5 laws and law making |
| f. specific | 6 almost never |
| g. urban | 7 arrive at an agreed price or set of terms for an exchange |
| h. human resources | 8 agree after everyone gives something up |
| i. indicate | 9 related to elected lawmakers |

j. bargain	10 some
k. advisers	11 now
l. uncommon	12 farming
m. parliamentary	13 the buying and selling of goods
n. appointed	14 hiring, training, and firing department
o. legislation	15 city-based
p. voters	16 point to/show
q. seldom	17 clearly stated/particular
r. the majority of	18 selected
s. assistants	19 helpers
t. agriculture	20 people who give opinions about what could or should be done
u. a number of	21 opinions about what could or should be done about a situation

8. Explain the meanings of the following words and expressions from the text. Make sentences with each of them

1. midterm elections
2. term of office
3. Senator
4. Representative
5. Congressman
6. parliamentary system of government
7. executive department
8. Secretary of an executive department
9. the President's Cabinet.

9. Complete the following text by translating the words and expressions in brackets

The President of the United States is chosen in a national election for a four-year (пребывание у власти), and may be (переизбран) for a second (срок). He must be a native-born citizen at least 35 years old. The president is paid a \$400,000 a year (2020); on top of that, they receive an extra \$50,000 expense allowance, a \$100,000 non-taxable travel account and \$19,000 for entertainment; but he must pay (подходный налог) on the whole amount. Also the President is provided with a home and extensive office space at the White House.

As head of the Executive Branch, the President must (выполнять) the government programmes (принятые) by Congress. He recommends programmes and laws to Congress and requests money for federal government operations. If a President "vetoes" or refuses to sign a bill passed by the Congress, his (вето) may be (отменено) by a two-thirds vote of both houses of Congress. The President (назначает) federal (судьи), (послы) and hundreds of government (чиновники), and assigns duties to the elected Vice President. If a President dies, (уходит в отставку) or becomes permanently disabled, the Vice President (принимает на себя его обязанности) until the next election.

Under the US Constitution a sitting President may be (сместен с должности) before his term expires only by an impeachment process that begins with the House of Representatives. If upon sufficient evidence, the House drafts a "bill of impeachment," which must be (одобрен) by two-thirds of its membership, (Судебный процесс) in the Senate, with the Chief Justice of the United States acting as the judge and the Senators as the jury, follows. Only one American President has ever been impeached: Andrew Johnson, who was (судим и оправдан) in 1868. But 1974 saw an equally historic confrontation arising out of the "Watergate" affair, which centered on illegal campaign contributions and involved (высокопоставленные государственные чиновники), including President Richard Nixon. Before a trial could take place, however, President Nixon (подал в отставку), and Gerald R. Ford, then Vice President, (сменил) him. The transition was quick and orderly as the business of the nation went on.

10. Answer the questions

1. How many terms may a Senator or a Representative serve?
2. Which house of Congress has the power to introduce laws?
3. Name at least three functions of Congress.
4. Does the President always belong to the party which has the majority in Congress?
5. What is the major difference of the American system of government from parliamentary ones?
6. Name at least three functions of the President.
7. Who succeeds the President if he dies or resigns?
8. Under what circumstances can the President be removed from office before his term expires?
9. Who does the President's Cabinet consist of?

11. Read the text and state briefly the functions of each department. Give Russian equivalents for the names of the departments

The Department of State, headed by the Secretary of State, advises the President on foreign relations. This department handles all peaceful dealings with other countries, and issues passports to American citizens who wish to travel abroad, and visas to visitors to the United States.

The Treasury Department manages government finances, collects taxes, mints coins and prints paper money. The Secret Service, which protects the President and the Vice President, their families and some other dignitaries, is also part of the Treasury Department. So are the Bureau of Customs and the Internal Revenue Service.

The Department of Defence is responsible for the nation's security. The Secretary of Defence is assisted by the Secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The Department of Justice, headed by the Attorney General, acts for the government in legal matters and moves against violators of federal laws. The FBI and federal prisons are under his jurisdiction.

The Department of the Interior protects and develops the nation's natural resources and manages the national parks. It also enforces federal hunting and fishing laws, checks on the safety of mines and is responsible for the welfare of the Indian tribes.

The Department of the Agriculture aids food production and looks after the interests of farmers. It issues numerous reports on the supply and prices of farm products, conducts scientific studies of agriculture and lends money to build rural electric systems. Most farms today are served by electricity.

The Department of Labour is concerned with the working conditions, safety and welfare of the nation's nonfarm workers. It enforces, among others, the laws on minimum wages and maximum hours for workers. The department's mediation and conciliation service helps employers and workers to settle labour disputes.

The Department of Commerce helps develop domestic commerce as well as trade with other countries, particularly in the mining, manufacturing and transportation industries. One of its important branches issues patents for new inventions; other test products to be sure they meet high standards and report on weather conditions.

In 1979 the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was reorganized into two separate agencies: *the Department of Health and Human Services* (HHS) and *the Department of Education*. HHS administers many of the nation's social services

programmes on a federal level. The Department of education administers and co-ordinates more than 150 federal aid-to-education programmes.

The Cabinet-level Department of Housing and Urban Development was created in 1965 to help provide adequate housing, particularly for low-income groups, and to foster large-scale urban renewal programmes. In 1966 President Lyndon Johnson proposed, and Congress approved, the establishment of a *Department of Transportation* to co-ordinate transportation activities previously carried on by several government agencies.

The Department of Energy, created in 1977 to address the nation's growing energy problems, consolidated the major federal energy functions into single Cabinet-level department. It is responsible for research, development and demonstration of energy technology; energy conservation; the nuclear weapons programme; regulation of energy production and use; pricing and allocation; and a central energy data collection and analysis programme.

In addition to the executive departments, there are numerous independent agencies charged with special functions. Largest of these is *the Postal Service*, directed by an 11-member board of governors, which was created in 1979 to replace the Post Office Department. It operates post offices, is responsible for handling and delivery of mail and issues stamps.

Other independent regulatory agencies set rules and standards in such fields as rail and air transportation, domestic trade practices, broadcasting licenses and telephone and telegraph rates, investment trading, some banking practices, and equal employment opportunities.

12. Read the text “The Federal Judiciary”

The third branch of government, in addition to the legislative (Congress) and executive (President) branches, is the federal judiciary. Its main instrument is the Supreme Court, which watches over the other two branches. It determines whether or not their laws and acts are in accordance with the Constitution. Congress has the power to fix the number of judges sitting on the Court, but it cannot change the powers given to the Supreme Court by the Constitution itself. The Supreme Court consists of a chief justice and eight associate justices. They are nominated by the President but must be approved by the Senate. Once approved, they hold office as Supreme Court Justices for life. A decision of the Supreme Court cannot be appealed to any other court. Neither the President nor Congress can change their decisions. In addition to the Supreme Court, Congress has established 11 federal courts of appeal and, below them, 91 federal district courts.

The Supreme Court has direct jurisdiction in only two kinds of cases: those involving foreign diplomats and those in which a state is a party. All other cases which reach the Court are appeals from lower courts. The Supreme Court chooses which of these it will hear. Most of the cases involve the interpretation of the Constitution. The Supreme Court also has the "power of judicial review," that is, it has the right to declare laws and actions of the federal, state, and local governments unconstitutional. While not stated in the Constitution, this power was established over time.

13. Match the words from the text above and their definitions

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. legislative | a. law-related |
| 2. judiciary | b. judges |
| 3. instrument | c. peacekeepers |
| 4. determines | d. going against something in the Constitution |
| 5. in accordance with | e. going along with/obeying |
| 6. associate | f. law-based |
| 7. justices
review | g. taking a court case to a higher court for |
| 8. appeal | h. related to judges and the court system |
| 9. jurisdiction | j. understanding/ explanation |
| 10.diplomats
something | k. tool or object used to do work or measure |
| 11.interpretation | l. legal control/area of legal control |
| 12.judicial | m. business partner |
| 13.unconstitutional | n. decides/figures out |

14. Explain the meanings of the following expressions from the text and make sentences with each of them

Chief Justice; Associate Justice; federal court; district court; direct jurisdiction; lower court; to be unconstitutional.

15. Answer the questions

1. What are the functions of the Supreme Court of the USA?
2. Who does the Supreme Court consist of?
3. How long do the Supreme Court Justices serve?

4. Are the Supreme Court Justices elected?
5. Who can change the decisions of the Supreme Court?
6. What lower courts, besides the Supreme Court, are there in the USA ?
7. In what kinds of cases does the Supreme Court have direct jurisdiction?
8. What is the "power of judicial review"?

The system of checks and balances

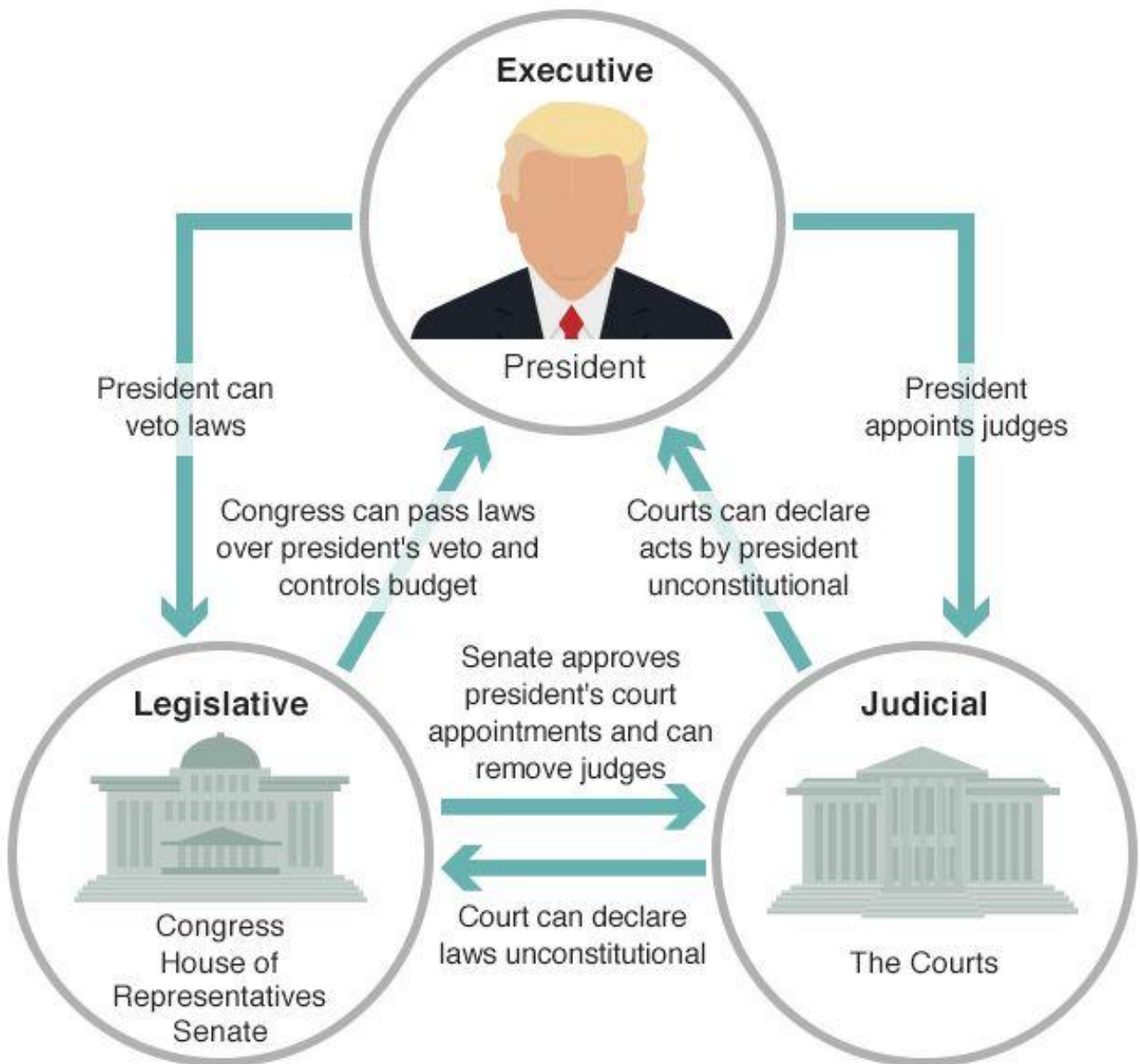
1. Read the text and look at the chart

The Constitution provides for three main branches of government which are separate and distinct from one another. The powers given to each are carefully balanced by the powers of the other two. Each branch serves as a check on the others. This is to keep any branch from gaining too much power or from misusing its powers. The chart below illustrates how the equal branches of government are connected and how each is dependent on the other two.

Congress has the power to make laws, but the President may veto any act of Congress. Congress, in its turn, can override a veto by a two-thirds vote in each house. Congress can also refuse to provide funds requested by the President. The President can appoint important officials of his administration, but they must be approved by the Senate. The President also has the power to name all federal judges; they, too, must be approved by the Senate. The courts have the power to determine the constitutionality of all acts of Congress and of presidential actions, and to strike down those they find unconstitutional.

The system of checks and balances makes compromise and consensus necessary. Compromise is also a vital aspect of other levels of government in the United States. This system protects against extremes. It means, for example, that new presidents cannot radically change governmental policies just as they wish. In the US, therefore, when people think of "the government", they usually mean the entire system, that is, the Executive Branch and the President, Congress, and the courts. In fact and in practice, therefore, the President (i.e. "the Administration") is not as powerful as many people outside the US seem to think he is. In comparison with other leaders in systems where the majority party forms "the government", he is much less so.

Checks and balances on the US government



BBC

2. Match the words with their definitions

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) misusing | 1 clear/separate |
| b) officials | 2 using something the wrong way |
| c) entire | 3 shows how |
| d) vital | 4 whole |
| e) appoint | 5 legal right to block a law |
| f) distinct | 6 money |
| g) compromise | 7 assign to a position |
| h) administration | 8 people in charge of something |

- i) unconstitutional 9 management
- j) radically 10 decide/figure out
- k) consensus 11 whether or not something agrees with the Constitution
- l) funds 12 going against something in the Constitution
- m) veto 13 agreement where everyone meets in the middle
- n) illustrates how 14 agreement
- o) determine 15 very important
- p) constitutionality 16 totally

3. Find in the text the English equivalents for the expressions below

1. БЫТЬ СВЯЗАННЫМ С
2. ПОЛУЧИТЬ СЛИШКОМ БОЛЬШУЮ ВЛАСТЬ
3. ЗАВИСЕТЬ ОТ
4. ПОЛИТИКА ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВА
5. ПАРТИЯ БОЛЬШИНСТВА
6. ОТКЛОНИТЬ ВЕТО ПРЕЗИДЕНТА
7. ОДОБРИТЬ
8. ПО СРАВНЕНИЮ С

4. Answer the questions

1. How are the powers of *the President, Congress, the Supreme Court* limited by the system of checks and balances?
2. What is the role of compromise in the American system of running the country?
3. Why do people abroad tend to exaggerate the power of the US President?

5. Watch the video “Separation of Powers”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5fGOsALkFA> and answer the following questions:

1. What is Trias Politica? Who proposed this idea?
2. What is each branch responsible for?
3. What other three powers are said to exist nowadays?
4. What does each of them do? Who checks them?

IV. American federalism

1. Read the first part of the text “Federalism: State and Local Governments”

The fifty states are quite diverse in size, population, climate, economy, history, and interests. The fifty state governments often differ from one another, too. Because they often approach political, social, or economic questions differently, the states have been called “laboratories of democracy”. However, they share certain basic structures. The individual states all have republican forms of government with a senate and a house. (There is one exception, Nebraska, which has only one legislative body of 49 “senators”). All have executive branches headed by state governors and independent court systems. Each state has also its own constitution. But all must respect the federal laws and not make laws that interfere with those of the other states (e.g., someone who is divorced under the laws of one state is legally divorced in all). Likewise, cities and local authorities must make their laws and regulations so that they fit their own state's constitution.

The Constitution limits the federal government to specific powers, but modern judicial interpretations of the Constitution have expanded federal responsibilities. All others automatically belong to the states and to the local communities. This has meant that there has always been a battle between federal and state's rights. The traditional American distrust of a too powerful central government has kept the battle fairly even over the years. The states and local communities in the US have rights that in other countries generally belong to the central government.

1a. Match the words with their definitions

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| a. likewise | 1 many different kinds of people or things |
| b. interpretations | 2 process of people making, selling, and buying things |
| c. regulations | 3 money-based |
| d. diverse | 4 system or country where leaders are chosen by votes |
| e. authorities | 5 law-based |
| f. legislative | 6 also |
| g. economy | 7 people in charge |
| h. judicial | 8 rules |
| i. democracy | 9 clearly stated/particular |
| j. the traditional | 10 law-related |

k. economic	11 understandings/ explanations
l. distrust	12 the usual
m. specific	13 suspicion

1b. Complete the second part of the text with the following words and phrases:

abortion, accountability, administration, agencies, architectural, attempted to, capital punishment, censorship, citizens, considerable, constitutional rights, council, democracy, determine, enormous, guarantees, individual's, kidnapping, largely, officials, petition, place of residence, proposition, propositions, regardless of, regulations, satisfy, similarly, voters.

All education at any level, for example, is the concern of the states. The local communities have the real control at the public school level. They control _____ of the schools. They elect the school board _____, and their local community taxes _____ support the schools. Each individual school system, therefore, hires and fires and pays its own teachers. It sets its own policies within broad state guidelines. _____, there is no national police force, the FBI influence being limited to a very few federal crimes, such as _____. Each state has its own state police and its own criminal laws. The same is true with, for example, marriage and divorce laws, driving laws and licenses, drinking laws, and voting procedures. In turn, each city has its own police force that it hires, trains, controls, and organizes. Neither the President nor the governor of a state has direct power over it. By the way, police departments of counties are often called “sheriff departments”. Sheriffs are usually elected, but state and city police _____ are not.

There are many other areas which are also the concern of cities, towns, and villages. Among these are opening and closing hours for stores, street and road repair, or _____ laws and other _____. Also, local school board might _____ that a certain novel should not be in their school library. (A court, however, may later tell the community or school board that they have unfairly _____ exercise _____.) But another village, a few miles down the road, might accept both. The same is true of films.

Most states and some cities have their own income taxes. Many cities and counties also have their own laws saying who may and may not own a gun. Many airports, some of them international, are owned and controlled by cities or counties and have their own airport police. Finally, a great many of the most hotly debated questions, which in other countries are decided at the national level, are in America

settled by the individual states and communities. Among these are, for example, laws about drug use, _____, _____, and homosexuality.

A connecting thread that runs all the way through governments in the US is the “_____” of politicians, _____, _____, and governmental groups. This means that information and records on crimes, fires, marriages and divorces, court cases, property taxes, etc. are public information. It means, for example, that when a small town needs to build a school or buy a new police car, how much it will cost (and which company offered what at what cost) will be in the local newspaper. In some cities, meetings of the city _____ are carried live on the radio. As a rule, politicians in the US at any level pay _____ attention to public opinion. Ordinary _____ participate actively and directly in decisions that concern them. In some states, such as California, in fact, _____ can _____ to have questions (i.e., “_____”) put on the ballot in state elections. If the _____ is approved by the _____, it then becomes a law. This “grass roots” character of American _____ can also be seen in New England town meetings or at the public hearings of local school boards.

Adding this up, America has an _____ variety in its governmental bodies. Its system tries to _____ the needs and wishes of people at the local level, while at the same time the Constitution _____ basic rights to anyone, anywhere in America. This has been very important, for instance, to the Civil Rights Movement and its struggle to secure equal rights for all Americans, _____ race, _____, or state voting laws. Therefore, although the states control their own elections as well as the registration procedures for national elections, they cannot make laws that would go against an individual's _____.

2. Find in the text the English equivalents for the following expressions below

1. ставить вопрос на голосование
2. расширить круг обязанностей
3. независимо от
4. транслировать по радио в прямом эфире
5. запретить продажу чего-либо
6. городской совет
7. общественное мнение
8. обеспечить равные права.

3. Answer the questions

1. What are the common principles in the structures of governments of individual states?
2. Who is the head of the executive branch of power in each state?
3. How must laws and constitutions of different states correlate?
4. What is meant by the “battle” between federal and states' rights?
5. Give at least 5 examples of the areas of public life that the states are responsible for.
6. What is a “sheriff department” and who is a sheriff?
7. Are income taxes and prices of goods the same in different states?
8. What is meant by the “accountability” of politicians and officials?

V. Elections

The first political parties

The Constitution and the Bill of Rights illustrated two different sides of American political life. On the one hand people saw that the country needed a strong and efficient central authority. On the other hand they wanted to protect individual rights and freedoms. Differing ideas about the importance of these issues gave birth to the first political parties in the United States. *The Federalist Party* favored a strong President and federal government. For this reason it appealed to richer people who believed that a strong central government would make their property safer. *The Democratic Republican Party* attracted the less wealthy. This was because it supported the rights of the individual states. To people such as small farmers and craftsmen this seemed likely to make it easier for people like themselves to control government actions.

The Constitution says nothing about political parties, but over time the US has in fact developed a two-party system. The two leading parties are the Democrats and the Republicans. There are other parties besides these two, and foreign observers are often surprised to learn that among these are also a Communist party and several Socialist parties. Minor parties have occasionally won offices at lower levels of government, but they do not play a role in national politics. In fact, one does not need to be a member of a political party to run in any election at any level of government. Also, people can simply declare themselves to be members of one of the two major parties when they register to vote in a district.

Sometimes, the Democrats are thought of as associated with labour, and the Republicans with business and industry. Republicans also tend to oppose the greater involvement of the federal government in some areas of public life which they consider to be the responsibility of the states and communities. Democrats, on the other hand, tend to favour a more active role of the central government in social matters.

To distinguish between the parties is often difficult, however. Furthermore, the traditional European terms of "right" and "left", or "conservative" and "liberal" do not quite fit the American system. Someone from the "conservative right", for instance, would be against a strong central government. Or a Democrat from one part of the country could be very "liberal", and one from another part, quite "conservative". Even if they have been elected as Democrats or Republicans. Representatives or Senators are not bound to a party programme, nor are they subject to any discipline when they disagree with their party.

While some voters will vote a "straight ticket", in other words, for all of the Republican or Democratic candidates in an election, many do not. They vote for one party's candidate for one office, and another's for another. As a result, the political parties have much less actual power than they do in other nations.

In the US, parties cannot win seats which they are then free to fill with party members they have chosen. Rather, both Representatives and Senators are elected to serve the interests of the people and the areas they represent, that is, their "constituencies". In about 70 per cent of legislative decisions, Congressmen will vote with the specific wishes of their constituencies in mind, even if this goes against what their own parties might want as national policy. It is quite common, in fact, to find Democrats in Congress voting for a Republican President's legislation, quite a few Republicans voting against it, and so on.

2. Explain the difference between the two major parties in the US

3. Explain the meanings of the following expressions and give Russian equivalents for them

- a. to vote a "straight ticket"
- b. a major party
- c. a minor party
- d. liberal
- e. conservative
- f. to be bound to the party programme
- g. constituency

4. Listening

Watch the video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRu_JcarCDY **US Elections - How do they work?** a guide to the US political system explaining how elections work in the USA. Compare the UK and the USA electoral systems.

5. Read the text "Elections"

Anyone who is an American citizen, at least 18 years of age, and is registered to vote may vote. Each state has the right to determine registration procedures. A number of civic groups, such as the League of Women Voters, are actively trying to get more people involved in the electoral process and have drives to register as many people as possible. Voter registration and voting among minorities has dramatically

increased during the last twenty years, especially as a result of the Civil Rights Movement.

There is some concern, however, about the number of citizens who could vote in national elections but do not. Four-in-ten Americans who were eligible to vote did not do so in 2016. But then, Americans who want to vote must register, that is put down their names in register before the actual elections take place. There are 50 different registration laws in the US - one set for each state. In the South, voters often have to register not only locally but also at the county seat. In European countries, on the other hand, “permanent registration” of voters is most common. Of those voters in the United States who registered in the 2016 presidential elections (250,056,000) only 138,847,000 (55.7%) cast their ballots.

Another important factor is that there are many more elections in the US at the state and local levels than there are in most countries. If the number of those who vote in these elections (deciding, for example, if they should pay more taxes so a new main street bridge can be built) were included, the percentage in fact would not be that much different from other countries.

Certainly, Americans are much more interested in local politics than in those at the federal level. Many of the most important decisions, such as those concerning education, housing, taxes, and so on, are made close to home, in the state or county.

The national presidential elections really consist of two separate campaigns: one is for *the nomination of candidates* at national party conventions. The other is *to win the actual election*. The nominating race is a competition between members of the same party. They run in a succession of state primaries and caucuses (which take place between March and June). They hope to gain a majority of delegate votes for their national party conventions (in July or August). The party convention then votes to select the party's official candidate for the presidency. Then follow several months of presidential campaigns by the candidates.

In November of the election year (years divisible by four, e.g. 1988, 1992, 1996, etc.), the voters across the nation go to the polls. If the majority of the popular votes in a state go to the Presidential (and vice-presidential) candidate of one party, then that person is supposed to get all of that state's “electoral votes”. These electoral votes are equal to the number of Senators and Representatives each state has in Congress. The candidate with the largest number of these electoral votes wins the election. Each state's electoral votes are formally reported by the “Electoral College”. In January of the following year, in a joint session of Congress, the new President and Vice-President are officially announced.

6. Find in the text the English equivalents for the words and expressions below

- a. зарегистрироваться для голосования
- b. президентские выборы
- c. избиратели
- d. избирательный бюллетень
- e. избирательная кампания
- f. кандидат в президенты
- g. коллегия выборщиков
- h. утверждение кандидата
- i. первичные выборы в партийных организациях
- j. первичные выборы на партийных форумах
- k. партийный съезд
- l. избирательный участок

7. Answer the questions

1. Which American citizens may vote?
2. Why do you think many people who could vote in the national election don't do it?
3. Why are most Americans more interested in local politics than in those at the federal level?
4. What parts does the national presidential election consist of?
5. Describe the process of electing the President.

8. Listening <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/does-your-vote-count-the-electoral-college-explained-christina-greer#watch> Watch the video “**Does your vote count? The Electoral College explained**”. After that follow this link <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/does-your-vote-count-the-electoral-college-explained-christina-greer#review> and complete the tasks. Report your findings to the group.

9. The project activity

The United States chooses its president and vice president through indirect elections.

- a. Think of other countries that you have visited or heard of in the news (or countries where you may have friends and relatives).

- b. How do those countries choose their presidents? Do those countries elect a president or a prime minister?
- c. Do those countries have vice presidents?

America is commonly defined as a democracy.

- d. What are the various definitions of a democracy?
- e. After examining the definition(s), do you still think America is a democracy? f. Can you think of other countries that are democracies?
- g. How do they elect their leaders?
- h. Is the system similar to the US? What about countries that are not democracies? How are leaders chosen in non-democratic countries?

America has never had a female president or vice president.

- i. Can you think of other countries that have elected women as their president or vice president?
- j. What system does that particular country have?

<http://www.ndi.org/>

<http://www.madeindemocracies.org/>

http://www.nobelprize.org/educational/peace/democracy_map/

Many people think the United States should get rid of the Electoral College completely. They believe the winner-take-all system is not fair. Can we think of a compromise for those who want to get rid of the Electoral College and those who want the president and vice president to be elected by the popular vote?

- k. What are some pros and cons of the Electoral College?
- l. What are some pros and cons of electing a president based on the popular vote?
- m. Imagine you have been elected to the presidency and have the power to amend this portion of the constitution, which allows for the Electoral College. Would you change the system? Why or why not?

10. Read the text and compare political attitudes in the US and in your country. Find the statements you agree and disagree with

It's often been said that Americans seem almost instinctively to dislike government and politicians. They especially tend to dislike “those fools in Washington” who spend their tax money and are always trying to “interfere” in their

local and private concerns. Many would no doubt agree with the statement that the best government is the one that governs least. In a 2016 poll, for example, only a fourth of those asked wanted the federal government to do more to solve the country's problems. Neighbourhoods, communities, and states have a strong pride in their ability to deal with their problems themselves, and this feeling is especially strong in the West.

Americans are seldom impressed by government officials (they do like royalty, as long as it's not theirs). They distrust people who call themselves experts. They don't like being ordered to do anything. For example, in the Revolutionary War (1776-83) and in the Civil War (1861-65), American soldiers often elected their own officers. In their films and fiction as well as in television series, Americans often portray corrupt politicians and incompetent officials. Anyone who wants to be President, they say with a smile, isn't qualified. Their newsmen and journalists and television reporters are known the world over for "not showing proper respect" to governmental leaders, whether their own or others. As thousands of foreign observers have remarked, Americans simply do not like authority.

Many visitors to the US are still surprised by the strong egalitarian tendencies they meet in daily life. Americans from different walks of life, people with different educational and social backgrounds, will often start talking with one another "just as if they were all equal". Is everybody equal in the land that stated - in the eyes of God and the law - that "all men are created equal?" No, of course not. Some have advantages of birth, wealth, or talent. Some have been to better schools. Some have skins or accents or beliefs that their neighbours don't especially like. Yet the ideal is ever-present in a land where so many different races, language groups, cultural and religious beliefs, hopes, dreams, traditional hates and dislikes have come together.

All in all, what do Americans think of their system of government? What would "We the People" decide today? One American, a Nobel Prize winner in literature, gave this opinion: "We are able to believe that our government is weak, stupid, overbearing, dishonest, and inefficient, and at the same time we are deeply convinced that it is the best government in the world, and we would like to impose it upon everyone else". Of course, many of today's 328, 2 million Americans would disagree in part or with all. "Who is this one American", they might ask, "to speak for all of us"?

VI. Language activities

I. Listening

Former US President Barack Obama was interviewed by ATTN (makes videos for social networks) about why it is important to participate in the US elections. The fact is that on November 6, a number of governors, senators and the composition of the House of Representatives will be elected in America. In the video, Obama explains why popular misconceptions about elections are nonsense. Obama is formulating excuses typical of those who are about to skip the election. And argues with them - gives reasons why it is still worth participating. Here's a quick summary with helpful phrases: try to catch them as you listen. And at the same time compare the American electoral system with the Russian one.

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1052577837968846848>

1. I don't care about politics

I don't care about smth — меня что-то не интересует

To throw a wrench in somebody's plans — вставить палки в колеса (нарушить чьи-то планы)

2. I can't relate to the candidates

As a whole — в целом

Here's your chance to do smth — это ваш шанс сделать что-то

3. My vote doesn't matter

To pick somebody's playlist — сформировать чей-то плейлист

To determine the future — определить будущее

4. Midterms are boring

To fill smth with smth — заполнить что-то чем-то

Scrolling through photos — прокрутка фотографий (в ленте)

5. I don't know the candidates well enough

To vote somebody out — проголосовать против кого-то

To share somebody's values — разделять чьи-либо ценности

6. I don't know where I supposed to vote

Just go to website — просто зайдите на сайт

It's pretty simple — это довольно просто

7. I don't have time to vote

It's not easy to do smth — не так легко сделать что-то

To beat the lines — избежать очередей

II. Reading and speaking. Fill in the gaps with the suitable words and expressions according to the meaning. Retell the texts

A. The American Flag

States; purity; displayed; stripes; major; colonies; hardiness; rectangle; arranged; design; perseverance

The national flag of the United States has thirteen red and white a. _____ and a blue b. _____ with fifty stars in it in the top left corner. The stripes represent the 13 American c. _____ and the stars show the 50 American d. _____. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well; red symbolizes e. _____ and valor, white symbolizes f. _____ and innocence, and blue represents vigilance, g. _____ and justice.

Until 1912 there had been no common design for the American flag. It has changed many times during its over two hundred year history. Flag makers around the country h. _____ the stars in the way they wanted, sometimes in circles, sometimes in rows.

According to the history books the first American flag was made by Betsy Ross who knew George Washington well. One day Washington showed up in her shop in Philadelphia and showed her the i. _____ of the flag. The first unofficial flag, made in 1776 at the beginning of the War of Independence, showed 13 stripes and the Union Jack in the left corner.

The bombing of Fort McHenry during the War of 1812 inspired Francis Scott Key to write a poem about the American flag. A few years later the lyrics were used for the Star Spangled Banner, America's national anthem.

During the American Civil War the southern states, which broke away from the Union, designed their own flag. It had the same colors but the stars were arranged in a different pattern.

In 1912 the American president ordered that the American flag was to have the same design all over the country. For over 50 years the flag has not changed. In 1959 the last j. _____ change took place when Alaska and Hawaii became American states, replacing the 48-star flag with the 50-star flag.

The American flag is a common sight around the world, one which everybody recognizes. In the US it is often k. _____ in public buildings and schools. Often, it serves as a motif on badges, cars or stamps. The flag has become a powerful symbol of Americanism.

The Stars and Stripes has travelled to many places around the world. In 1909 Robert Peary placed a flag at the North Pole and in 1969 American astronaut Neill Armstrong put an American flag on the moon.

B. Independence Day

Taxes; extraordinary; drafting; representation; adopted; sever; to quell; fruitless

“No taxation without a. ____!” was the battle cry in America’s 13 Colonies, which were forced to pay b. ____ to England's King George III despite having no representation in the British Parliament. As dissatisfaction grew, British troops were sent c. ____ in the early movement toward rebellion. Repeated attempts by the Colonists to resolve the crisis without military conflict proved d. ____.

On June 11, 1776, the Colonies' Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia and formed a committee whose express purpose was e. ____ a document that would formally f. ____ their ties with Great Britain. A total of 86 changes were made to his draft and the Continental Congress officially g. ____ the final version on July 4, 1776.

The following day, copies of the Declaration of Independence were distributed, and on July 6, The Pennsylvania Evening Post became the first newspaper to print the h. ____ document. The Declaration of Independence has since become the nation's most cherished symbol of liberty.

On July 8, 1776, the first public readings of the Declaration were held in Philadelphia's Independence Square to the ringing of bells and band music. One year later, on July 4, 1777, Philadelphia marked Independence Day by adjourning Congress and celebrating with bonfires, bells and fireworks.

The custom eventually spread to other towns, both large and small, where the day was marked with processions, picnics, contests, games, military displays and fireworks.

Congress established Independence Day as a holiday in 1870 and in 1938 Congress reaffirmed it as a paid holiday for federal employees. Today, communities across the nation mark this major midsummer holiday with parades, firework displays, picnics and performances of “The Star-Spangled Banner”.

C. Why Is the White House White?

Lime-based; distinguish; scorch; cracking; set fire; residence; Executive

We have all heard of the famous White House in Washington, USA, home of the President of America. But how many of us know why it is white? A popular myth exists that the White House was first painted white to cover the a.____ marks left after British soldiers b.____ to the house during the War of 1812. Actually, the White House first gained a c.____ whitewash in 1798 to protect the exterior stone from moisture and d. ____ during winter freezes. The term “White House” was occasionally used before the War of 1812, with the phrase appearing in newspapers in the first decade of the 19th century.

In 1901, President Theodore Roosevelt officially named the Executive Mansion the “White House”. Before that, the White House had been called several names, including the “President’s House”, and the “e. ____ Mansion”. Since nearly every U.S. state had an “executive mansion” for its governor, President Roosevelt believed the name “White House” would f. ____ it as the official g. ____ of the President of the United States.

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THE US POLITICAL SYSTEM

Учебно-методическое пособие

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