

Study Guide: Georgia Constitution and Georgia Government

References:

----- The Constitution of the State of Georgia, published by the office of the Secretary of State of Georgia; available on line at <http://www.law.emory.edu/GEORGIA/gaconst.html>

Copies of the Georgia Constitution are on reserve at the circulation desk of the Reese Library. They may be checked out for three days at a time.

----- Georgia Government, published by the League of Women Voters of Georgia. A copy of Georgia Government is on reserve at the library circulation desk as well.

1. How many provisions (paragraphs in Article 1, Section I) are there in the Bill of Rights of the Georgia constitution?
2. Name two or more provisions in the Georgia Bill of Rights that are not stated in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution.
3. Article I, Section II, paragraph IX spells out Georgia's provisions for sovereign immunity. What is sovereign immunity? Would you say that the State has absolute or limited sovereign immunity?
4. Give a one-sentence definition of eminent domain (Article I, Section III, General provisions). Give an example of the use of eminent domain.
5. May a person who is serving a sentence for a felony conviction vote in Georgia's elections?
6. The State of Georgia requires a majority, not a plurality, in the vote count for the election of several of its constitutional officers. Explain what happens if a candidate does not garner at least 51 percent of the vote (Article II, Section II, paragraph II):
7. How many state senators are in the Georgia Senate? How many state representatives in the Georgia House of Representatives?
8. Are the minimum ages for election to the Georgia General Assembly the same as the age qualifications for the Congress of the United States? What are they? (Fill in blanks):

U.S. Senate:- U.S. House:-

Georgia Senate:- Georgia House: _

9. How long is a session (number of days) of the Georgia General Assembly? Explain how the General Assembly can convene on January 12, adjourn on March 27, and still call it a 40-day session.
10. Are bills in the General Assembly allowed to have "riders"? Give a short description of a rider. See Article III. Section V.--"Enactment of Laws"
11. Does the Governor of Georgia have the line-item veto power? (Look at Article III, Section V.) Can the line-item veto be used in all categories of legislation, or just in appropriations (expenditures)?
12. Magistrate courts, probate courts, juvenile courts, and state courts are courts of state jurisdiction. For example, probate courts handle matters pertaining to wills, trusts and administration of estates. A magistrate court handles small claims, and a state court handles misdemeanors. In contrast, the _____ has jurisdiction over a broad range of cases. It is the court of original jurisdiction in felony trials.
13. The two key appellate courts in Georgia are the _____ with ten judges and the _____ with up to nine (presently seven) justices.
14. True or false (circle one). All Superior Court and State Court judges in Georgia are elected on a nonpartisan basis.
15. The state's prosecuting attorney in each judicial circuit is called a (a) district attorney; (b) magistrate; (c) U.S. attorney, or (d) solicitor general.
16. The power to discipline or remove judges is vested in the _____.
17. What is the job of the Public Service Commission? (What does it regulate?) How are its members chosen?
18. Name the powers of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles.
19. Give the titles of the state executive officers who are not appointed by the governor but who are elected in statewide elections.
20. Name several purposes for which general obligation debt can be incurred by the state: How is general obligation debt repaid?
21. Name several purposes for which guaranteed revenue debt can be incurred by the state: How is guaranteed revenue debt repaid?
22. What is the top limit at which state ad valorem taxes can be levied on tangible property?

The Georgia Constitution may not define "millage rate" but see if you can find out what this unit of taxation means.

23. Can local governments set up differing amounts of homestead exemptions from ad valorem taxation levied in their communities?

The Georgia Constitution may not define "homestead exemption" but see if you can find out what this taxation provision means.

24. What are the five categories of expenditures for which lottery proceeds can be used?

a) b) c) d) e) (see Article I, section II)

25. What is a "sinking fund"?

26. Is interest on the state debt exempt from taxation?

27. To what exclusive purpose are receipts from motor fuel taxes dedicated? In other words, how is gasoline tax money to be spent?

28. The State of Georgia is required to have a balanced budget. Unlike to federal government, it cannot run a deficit. However, it can incur temporary debt. What are the conditions under which the General Assembly can appropriate (spend) money which has not yet been collected in the State treasury? See Article VII, Section IV. State Debt.

Condition #1: When taxes are not collected until the middle or the end of the year, how does the state pay its operating obligations in the first few months of the year? see para. I (b)

Condition #2: In repaying bonds (revenue bonds and general obligation bonds) there is a limit on how much the state can incur debt service. see para. II (b) How is this calculated?

Condition #3: What is the maximum term (number of years) in which any state debt can be incurred? see para. II (C)

29. How is the State Board of Education comprised?

30. The executive officer of the State Board of Education is the _____. How is he or she chosen?

31. The _____ of the University System of Georgia is the governing body for the 34 public colleges and universities in the state.

32. What is the title of the chief executive officer of the University System of Georgia? (This will not be listed in the Georgia constitution. See if you can find it elsewhere)

33. Does each educational institution in the state get its own separate appropriation from the General Assembly?

34. What is the maximum tax levy allowed for school tax within each local school system?

35. How many counties does Georgia have?

36. Name several county elected officials whose positions are provided by law in the Georgia Constitution.

37. What is Home Rule?

38. What is consolidation? Describe the procedures a local government would have to go through in order to consolidate.

39. When did the present constitution of Georgia become effective?

40. When was the last time it was amended?

41. Which office under the Governor's direction manages the strategic planning for state government, as well as consolidates all the expenditure requests from various agencies into one unified budget proposal which the Governor sends to the General Assembly?

42. What are the responsibilities of the Secretary of State? (see listing under "Executive Branch" of LWVGA's Georgia Government).

43. What is the jurisdiction of the State Court? What types of cases does it handle? What is an example of a misdemeanor? (see listing under "Judicial Branch" of LWVGA's Georgia Government).

44. What does a traverse jury do? What does a grand jury do? (see listing under "Judicial Branch" of LWVGA's Georgia Government).

45. Georgia's general sales tax is levied on what items? For what do local governments use local option sales taxes?(see listing under "Finances" of LWVGA's Georgia Government).

46. What are the key sources of income (types of tax revenue) for Georgia's government? What is the largest category of expenditure? (see pie charts under "Finances" of LWVGA's Georgia Government).

47. What does it mean to have an open, direct primary? (see listing under "Elections" of LWVGA's Georgia Government).

48. What are the conditions for registering and voting by absentee ballot in Georgia? (see listing under "Elections" of LWVGA's Georgia Government).

49. What are the responsibilities of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources?