

## 2020-2021 We the People State Hearing Questions: Middle School Division

Directions: The following state-level We the People...the Citizen and the Constitution hearing questions are for middle school use with the mock congressional hearings. For each unit, students will prepare a four-minute presentation addressing all bullet points contained in the unit. The judges will read the full set of questions for each unit and the response for four minutes must address all bullet points. Following the prepared testimony, judges will have six minutes to ask a variety of follow up questions. Students will not know the follow up questions in advance. Video samples are on the website to demonstrate the format and process for the online hearings. For questions, contact [justiceteaching@flsouthern.edu](mailto:justiceteaching@flsouthern.edu) or [apitts@flsouthern.edu](mailto:apitts@flsouthern.edu).

### Unit 1

How can the design of government prevent abuses of power?

- Why do we need government? What is a constitution and what does it generally include?
- What Enlightenment ideas did the Founders consider when developing the U.S. Constitution?
- What is a constitutional government and what specific ways does the United States Constitution limit the powers of our government and prevent abuses of power?
- What is the rule of law and how is it reflected in our constitutional government?

### Unit 2

What ideas did the colonists in America use to create their governments?

- What documents and people influenced early governments in the Americas?
- What ideas about government were in the Declaration of Independence? How did these ideas serve as a foundation to the United States Constitution?
- How is the United States Constitution different from the Articles of Confederation? Give specific examples.

### Unit 3

How is our government organized in the United States Constitution?

- What are the three branches of government? How does the U.S. Constitution limit the powers of each branch of government?
- Why are the separation of powers and checks and balances important in our constitutional design?

- What is federalism? What is the relationship between state and federal governments?

#### **Unit 4**

How was judicial review established?

- What was the significance and outcome of the Marbury v. Madison decision in the United States Supreme Court?
- What is judicial review and how does it apply to laws passed by the state and federal government?
- How does the power of judicial review protect the rights of the people?
- How is the judicial branch different from the other branches?

#### **Unit 5**

The United States Constitution has more amendments addressing voting than any other issue. How has the right to vote expanded since the adoption of the U.S. Constitution?

- What actions by individuals and groups have expanded the right to vote in the United States? Can you identify any specific people or groups that have contributed to the expansion of voting rights?
- How have voting amendments to the U.S. Constitution affected participation in the political process? What groups can vote because of constitutional amendments?
- How have other governmental decisions or policies brought about changes in voting practices?

#### **Unit 6**

What are the responsibilities of citizens to participate in government?

- Is voting a right, a responsibility, or both?
- What other ways can we participate in government?
- “Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America.”\* What is the significance of the words expressed by the late U.S. Representative John Lewis? What lessons from the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s can we apply to present-day struggles?

\* John Lewis, speech, Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, Alabama, March 1, 2020.