

NEW JERSEY GOVERNMENT QUIZ

Test your knowledge of New Jersey government.

1. Why is the Governor's inauguration being held on Tuesday, January 17, 2006?
2. When was New Jersey's current Constitution approved?
3. Where was New Jersey's last Constitutional Convention held?
4. An individual can serve as governor of New Jersey for how many years?
5. Why has New Jersey's governor been called the most powerful governor in the country?
6. What are the biggest issues facing the new governor?
7. How are the members of the New Jersey Supreme Court selected?
8. The New Jersey Legislature has how many members?
9. How many statewide elective positions are there in New Jersey? What are they?
10. What is the name of the Governor's mansion and where is it located?

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ANSWERS

1. Section 5 of Article V of the New Jersey Constitution (The "Executive" Article) specifies that the term of the governor shall begin "at noon of the third Tuesday in January next following his election". The third Tuesday in January after the November 2005 election is January 17, 2006.

Neither the state Constitution nor state law require an "inauguration" ceremony. An "inauguration" is an installation or commencement ceremony that officially and publicly indicates the start of a new term or office.

2. After a Constitutional Convention developed a new constitution during the summer of 1947 and the voters approved it at the November 2007 election, the current state constitution went into effect on January 1, 1948. This was the third Constitution for the State of New Jersey. The first state Constitution was written on July 2, 1776 as the British were approaching Sandy Hook and approved by publication. The second state constitution was written and approved in 1844. Major revisions were made in 1875, to make the Constitution conform with the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. In addition, the 1875 constitutional amendments included the requirement that the legislature "provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of free public schools" (Art. VIII "Taxation and Finance", Sec. IV, para. 1)

The 1947 Constitution has been amended more than a dozen times since its enactment. The most recent amendment was made at the November 2005 election when voters approved the new position of Lieutenant Governor, effective January 17, 2006.

Is there an amendment that you would like to make to the state Constitution? Research the process for amending the state constitution.

3. In the summer of 1947, from June 12 until September 10, 1947, 81 elected delegates met at the Rutgers Gym on College Avenue in New Brunswick to draft a new state constitution.

Hold a mock constitutional convention in your classroom. Research what issues you would like to address at your constitutional convention.

4. The Governor of New Jersey has extensive Constitutional appointment and veto powers under Article V (the Executive Article) of the 1947 Constitution, which gives him great authority over the structure and functioning of state government. The governor may object to a bill (veto) whereupon it must be passed by 2/3 of the members of each house for it to become law (Art. V, Sec. I, para. 14e). The governor may also return a bill with recommended amendments (conditional veto) which the legislature may then reenact with the governor's recommendation (Art. V, Sec. I, para. 14f). Finally, the Governor may object to one or more items of appropriation (line-item veto) which then do not take effect unless passed by 2/3 of each house (Art. V, Sec. I, para. 15).

In addition, the Governor appoints the heads of each principal executive and administrative department, including the offices of Secretary of State and Attorney General (Art. V, Sec. IV). In many states the Attorney General and the Secretary of State are independently elected for these offices. The Governor also nominates and appoints, with the advice and consent of the Senate, the Chief Justice and associate justices of the Supreme Court, the Judges of the Superior Court and the judges of inferior courts with jurisdiction extending to more than one municipality (Art. VI, Sec. VI, para. 1).

Do you think that it is better to have a strong or weak Governor?
Would you like to be Governor? What would be your platform?

5. An individual may serve as governor of the State of New Jersey for two terms. Each term is four years. Under the original 1776 State Constitution, the legislature elected "some fit person within the Colony, to be Governor for one year". Under the 1844 Constitution, the Governor was elected by the public for a term of three years and could not serve for more than one consecutive term (but could serve non-consecutive terms).

Do you think that the governor's term should be shorter, longer, or is a four-year term with the possibility of two consecutive terms the optimal time? Explain your choice.

6. The biggest issues facing Governor Corzine can be summarized in three categories:

- How to determine what are essential services that government should provide.

- How to develop a fair system of taxation that will pay for these essential services.
- How to make sure that appointed and elected members of government at all levels perform honestly and for the benefit of the public.

What do you think are the most important issues facing New Jersey? How would you deal with them?

7. Article VI, Section VI of the New Jersey State Constitution states that "the Governor shall nominate and appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate, the Chief Justice and associate justices of the Supreme Court, the Judges of the Superior Court, and the judges of the inferior courts with jurisdiction extending to more than one municipality."

Unlike New Jersey, judges are elected by the public in the majority of states. The New Jersey court system has been praised nationally as being highly qualified, astute and independent, as well as activist. This is due at least in part to the fact that members of the judiciary are appointed rather than elected, making them less political.

In appointing the members of the New Jersey State Supreme Court, the governor follows an unwritten tradition of bipartisan appointments. Although there is nothing in the constitution or statutes that require the Governor to balance his appointments between the two parties, this has been the tradition at least since 1948. Of the seven members of the New Jersey State Supreme Court, four are currently Democrats and three are Republicans. Few states have such balanced courts. In ten states, the highest courts are currently made up of members all from one party.

Since the members of the New Jersey Supreme Court must retire at age 70, Governor Corzine will have at least two seats to fill: Chief Justice Deborah Poritz will turn 70 in 2006 and Associate Justice James Zazzali will become 70 in 2007.

Do you think that it is better to have appointed or elected judges? Why?

8. The New Jersey Legislature has 120 members: 40 State Senators and 80 members of the State General Assembly (NJ Constitution, Art. IV, Sec. II).

Prior to 1966, members of the New Jersey Senate represented the 21 counties, which had huge and growing discrepancies in terms of population. The

U.S. Supreme Court held in *Baker v. Carr*, 369 US 186 (1962) that the determination of voting districts was an issue that the courts could address and in *Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 US 533 (1964) that the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment required election districts to be of nearly equal populations: "as nearly as is practicable one man's vote must be worth as much as another's". Following these decisions, a state Constitutional Convention in 1966 created forty legislative districts with one State Senator and two members of the General Assembly to be elected from each district. These districts, and the congressional districts, are revisited and revised every decade after the federal census indicates what changes have taken place in the population.

Go to www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/legsearch.asp to find your legislative district and state legislative representatives,

Invite one of your state legislators to come to your classroom to participate in a mock legislative hearing and then to talk about the legislative process.

9. There are currently only three statewide elective positions in New Jersey: the governor and the two U.S. Senators from New Jersey. However, beginning in 2007, a Lieutenant Governor will also be elected statewide conjointly and for concurrent terms with the Governor, making four statewide elective positions. A statewide elected position of "State Comptroller" has been proposed by Governor-elect Corzine but no legislation has yet been introduced.

Do you think that we need a State Comptroller? Support your position. Write to Governor Corzine and explain why you think that we do or do not need a State Comptroller.

10. Since 1981, the official residence of the Governor of New Jersey has been "Drumthwacket," on Olden Lane or Route 206 in Princeton. Drumthwacket means "wooded hill" in Celtic. The land was originally owned by William Penn. It was purchased by William Olden in 1696. The central portion of the mansion was built in 1835 by Charles Smith Olden, who became governor of New Jersey in 1860. The property was purchased in 1893 and used as a private home until 1966 when it was purchased by the state of New Jersey. In 1981 Drumthwacket was designated as the official residence of the governor. However, the only governor to reside at Drumthwacket has been Governor McGreevey and his family. The mansion is used for receptions, dinners, balls for foreign dignitaries, by the New Jersey Legislature and by citizens' groups. The first floor of Drumthwacket is open for public tours.

From 1945 until 1981, "Morven," also on Route 206 in Princeton, served as the governor's mansion. Morven was built in 1754 by Richard Stockton, a signor of the Declaration of Independence, and remained in the Stockton family until 1928 when it was purchased by Gen. Robert Wood Johnson, chairman of Johnson & Johnson, who lived in it until 1944. Five governors lived in Morven: Alfred Discoll, Robert Meyner, Richard Hughes, William Cahill and Brendan Byrne. In 1981 Morven was converted into a museum and, after extensive renovations, was open to the public in 2004.

Would you like to live in a mansion? Would you like your home to be open to the public?

For additional information:

Call the New Jersey Center for Civic and Law-Related Education at 732-445-3413 or visit <http://civiced.rutgers.edu>. A series of lessons about New Jersey government will be available in 2006 from the New Jersey Center for Civic and Law-Related Education and will be on-line at this website and the website of the New Jersey State Bar Foundation at <http://www.njsbf.com>.

Robert F. Williams, *The New Jersey State Constitution: A Reference Guide*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

Carlo Vivian Bello and Arthur T. Vanderbilt II, *Jersey Justice: Three Hundred Years of the New Jersey Judiciary*, New Brunswick: NJ Institute for Continuing Legal Education, 1996.

The New Jersey State Constitution may be found at <http://www.njleg.nj.us/lawsconstitution/constitution.asp>

Information about the state of New Jersey can be found at the State of New Jersey website: www.nj.gov/government.shtml

For historical information about New Jersey and its government, see the webpage of the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the New Jersey Department of State, at: www.newjerseyhistory.org

Lessons about New Jersey can be found at Electronic New Jersey at www.usaennet.org/usa/nj/state/nj-history.htm