

# ***Crash Course*** **in HiSET Reading**

*Language Arts Skills You Need to Pass the HiSET Exam*

By Garry W. Johnson

**This *Crash Course in HiSET Reading* packet was created by tutor Garry W. Johnson in 2018, for Mrs. Teri Angel and the NECX Education Department.**

## **Crash Course in HiSET Reading**

Participants in TDOC Adult Basic Education (ABE) go through three levels of testing before taking the *High School Equivalency Test* (HiSET). The *Test of Adult Basic Education* (TABE), the *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS), and the *Official Practice Test* (OPT) each contain a significant “Reading” section. Students must be able to consistently perform at a ninth-grade level on all of these tests to qualify to take the state-funded HiSET. This packet is designed to challenge and improve your reading comprehension skills, and help you reach your testing goals. The questions are formulated to mimic those found in the various ABE tests.

The reading sections in this packet focus on Social Studies material you need to be familiar with. Please take the time to read this packet slowly and thoroughly. Pay special attention to the words in bold print. Make sure you know the meaning of every word in this packet. If you find any word you are unsure of, look it up in the dictionary and write it and its definition on a separate sheet of paper. **This is very important** to building your vocabulary. Throughout the packet there will be instructions relating to the topics covered. Please read them closely. Most answers missed on reading assignments are due to not following the directions.

### **Follow Instructions**

**Exercise 1: Please complete this exercise within two minutes. You must concentrate and work rapidly. Read all the directions carefully before doing anything:**

1. Print your name in the upper right-hand corner of this page.
2. Circle the word “name” in the sentence above.
3. Draw 2 small squares in the upper left-hand corner.
4. Put an “X” in each square.
5. Put a circle around each square.
6. Write “yes” after the title, *Crash Course* in HiSET Reading.
7. Put a circle around each word in sentence 6 above.
8. Put an “X” in the lower left-hand corner of this paper.
9. Draw a triangle around the “X” you just put down.
10. On the reverse side of this paper, sign your name at the bottom.
11. Draw a rectangle around the word “paper” in sentence 10.
12. Call out your first name when you get to this point in the test.
13. If you feel that you have followed directions up to this point, call out “I have!”
14. Count out loud in your normal speaking voice backwards from 10 to 1.
15. Now that you have finished reading this carefully, do only step 1.

## Getting the Point

The books and packets we use in the ABE program all attack the problem of reading comprehension from different angles, but what it always comes down to is “do you get the point?” You need to understand what you are being told by a passage, a paragraph, an article or a book in order to gain any kind of education – especially in prison. So you need to master the basic skills of reading comprehension to be successful in all (or any) of your subjects.

As with the last exercise, you are to be timed on each of the major tests in this program. This often causes anxiety for test-takers and may make them overlook key information, not only in the instructions but also in the test passages. As a result, many strategies have been developed to get students to think about what they are doing.

Some strategies recommend that you read the questions first, then read the passage quickly to find each answer. Others suggest you skim the passage, then try to answer the questions. For me it works best to read the passage carefully first, making sure I understand what each sentence is saying. I read at about the speed most people read aloud, that way I “hear” each word in my mind. Afterwards, I can answer most of the questions from memory, and if not, I am familiar enough with the passage to know where the answer is found.

## Finding What Works For You

Everyone has different learning styles, and it will take practice to determine what is the optimal strategy for you. You can practice with any form of reading material, but it is best to find subjects directly related to the other areas of the HiSET test. Read the following article at your normal pace and then after you are finished, test yourself with the questions about what you just read, and see how well you comprehend. Experiment with reading the next article faster and then the next slower, and gauge how well you understood what you read each time. Train your brain to remember the details and absorb the facts.

With practice, you will find the pace that you should maintain on the test while going back through passages. It should be a comfortable rate. This is not a speed reading exercise. If you have a good pace, and do not spend too much time on any question, you should have a sufficient amount of time to read the different sections of the passages at a comfortable rate. The two extremes you want to avoid are the dumbfounded mode, in which you are lip reading every word individually and mouthing each word as though in a stupor, and the overwhelmed mode, where you are panicked and are buzzing back and forth through the passage in a frenzy and not comprehending anything.

You must find your own pace that is relaxed and focused, allowing you to have time for every question and giving you optimal comprehension. Note that you are looking for *optimal* comprehension, not *maximum* comprehension. If you spent hours on each word and memorized the passage, you would have maximum comprehension. That is not the goal though, you want to optimize how much you comprehend with the time you spend on each article. It just takes practice. Read these next few articles, and let us see what you can learn and retain.

# American Government

The Federal Government is broken into three branches: the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial. Each one has powers that the others do not, and each one has powers that limit the other branches. This is called “checks and balances” (see sidebar).

The **Executive Branch** is under the President’s control. This branch enforces the law. The President has a cabinet of people (called “Secretaries”) who run major departments of the government: State, Agriculture, Justice, Veterans Affairs, Education, etc. The President appoints the heads of other groups, too, like the EPA, the CIA, the NSA and our embassies. Many of these executive positions have to be confirmed by Congress. The President is also “Commander and Chief” of the military, and has the power to make treaties with foreign nations.

When President Obama decided that the country was spending too much money enforcing the national marijuana laws, he gave an order to the Justice Department to stop enforcing them. This allowed Colorado and other states to pass their own laws making the drug legal to use in their states. However, the laws against weed still exist; President Obama could not change the laws. But Presidents can decide how the laws are enforced. The current administration is again enforcing most drug laws and the immigration laws too.

Another way the President acts as a check on the Congress is by use of his “bully pulpit.” The President has considerable sway over other politicians and a press core that follow him from place to place. He can use his influence and coverage in the media to endorse or ridicule actions of the other branches. President Trump has also added his use of Twitter as a direct link to his supporters.

The **Legislative Branch** writes the laws. The Congress is called a “bicameral legislature,” because it is broken into two separate sections: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Each state has two Senators, so all the states are represented equally there. Each state has a number of Representatives according to the number of people in the state, so big states like California have a lot of Representatives, but small states like Rhode Island only have a few.

Legislation happens when a Senator or a Representative writes a bill and sends it to a committee to be refined and to gather support. Then the other side of Congress writes a similar bill. Once both bills are approved, they are reconciled and a final vote taken.

## Additional Checks and Balances

These are ways each branch of government keeps the other branches from getting carried away. These are just a few:

**EXECUTIVE** – The President can veto any bills coming from Congress to keep them from becoming law.

The President also appoints Supreme Court justices, so he makes sure that his appointees have views that match his on everything that matters to him.

**LEGISLATIVE** – If the President vetoes a bill, Congress can still make it a law if two thirds of both houses vote for the bill a second time around.

Congress can also impeach the President if he gets out of pocket.

Congress has to vote in (confirm) anyone the President picks to be a Supreme Court judge.

**SUPREME COURT** – The judges are in for life. They can disagree with the President, and there is nothing he can do about it.

The Court can overturn laws if they believe they violate the Constitution.

**VOTERS** – Congressmen and the President come up for election every few years: The President can only be elected twice and serve a maximum of 10 years, but Congressmen can go for as long as they continue to be reelected.

If both sides of Congress vote for a bill, it goes to the President to sign. If the President signs it, or he does not sign it and it sits on his desk for ten days while Congress is in session, then it becomes a law. The President can “veto” a bill (reject it) if he disagrees with its content. If the President vetoes a bill, Congress can still make it into a law if they take another vote and two thirds of them vote for it. The final option is a “pocket veto,” which happens if Congress adjourns during the ten days and the President refuses to sign it. This veto cannot be overridden.

Congress also controls the federal budget, often referred to as “the purse strings.” If the President tries to conduct a war (or anything else) by “executive action,” the Congress can choose not to fund it. (Only Congress can declare an actual “war,” so these are often referred to as “policing actions.”) Executive orders, like when Obama offered temporary legal status to millions of illegal immigrants, can also be terminated by the next President.

Finally, the House of Representatives has the power to impeach, or “bring to trial” a sitting President. The Senate then holds a trial and can remove the President from office if he is found guilty. Only two Presidents have ever faced impeachment: Andrew Johnson and William Jefferson (Bill) Clinton – neither of which were removed from office. President Richard Nixon was threatened with impeachment, but chose to resign.

The **Judicial Branch** includes the U.S. Supreme Court and all the Federal Courts across the Country. They interpret the laws. That is not always easy to do. For example, when the Congress passed an amendment saying there can be no “cruel and unusual” punishment, what does that mean? Can a jail put you in the hole for sixty days? Can they beat you with a whip?

People often disagree about what a law says, and lots of times the laws do not keep up with technology. The Supreme Court is tasked with making decisions by interpreting the laws that Congress makes. They can also say that a law is “unconstitutional” by their interpretation of what the Constitution says. Because their job is subjective (subject to their *opinion*), a big deal is made when a President gets to appoint one.

There are nine Supreme Court judges and they serve for life, or until they decide to retire.

The **electoral system** has come under criticism in recent elections. The President is elected every four years, and he/she is only allowed to run twice. Presidential elections are long and exhausting, and the last few have highlighted deep divides in the views of the American people.

To get on the ballot, a candidate must have at least 100,000 people in each state sign a petition saying they might vote for him (“parties” usually perform this function). There are also other constitutional limits: The candidate must be at least 35 years old, and he must have been born in the United States.

Representatives and Senators serve two- and six-year terms, respectively. Their elections are held every two years and are staggered (“mid-term” elections refer to non-presidential election years.) Senators must be at least 30, and Representatives must be 25 or older. They must actually live in the state they represent (which is why Hillary Clinton had to move to New York after she was elected Senator there). Congressmen can serve as long as they keep getting reelected. Orrin Hatch, the longest serving Republican Senator, announced his retirement this year (2018) after 41 years in Congress. He has been seated in the Senate since 1977.

Even though the American system was designed to do away with the Aristocracy (Kings who were kings because their fathers were kings), lately there are several family dynasties that have come to power. Al Gore, who was born in Washington D.C., was the son of a Congressman himself. Senator John Duncan is the son of a Senator, who was also the son of a Senator. (Senator Duncan's son, Zane, currently sits on the Parole Board.) Governor Mitt Romney, who ran for President, was the son of another Governor who ran for President. And we all know the Bush family. However, as Jeb Bush found out, just because your daddy *and* your brother were President, does not guarantee you will be.

The **Vice President** only has a couple jobs. In good times, he meets the Presidents and Prime Ministers from countries that do not really matter much (foreign dignitaries), and he gets sent out on social missions to make the U.S. President look good. Also, if there is a tie vote in Congress, he decides which side wins. In bad times, when the President dies or is too sick to do his job, he becomes the President.

If both the President and the Vice President are killed, the Speaker of the House becomes the President. Gerald Ford became President that way, because Richard Nixon resigned and Vice President Spiro Agnew had already quit.

Remember that there are two parts of Congress: the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are two main **political parties**: the Democrats and the Republicans. Whichever of the two have more people in Congress is called the Majority. The other party is the Minority. Some politicians identify as "Independents," which mean they belong to neither of the main parties. (Rand Paul, a Senator from Kentucky, considers himself a "Libertarian," which would require a whole other packet to explain!)

Each part of Congress is broken into smaller **committees**, like the Armed Forces Committee or the Intelligence Committee. Congressmen have more or less power, depending on what committees they are on. A Congressman who is not on a committee at all has almost no power, since he can not put forth any bills without someone else's help.

The **Speaker of the House** is a powerful Congressman, because he controls what bills go up for a vote, and when, in the House. The Senate Majority Leader does the same in the Senate.

Each party has someone called a **party whip**. The whip is someone who makes sure Congressmen in their party vote the way the party wants. So even if a Congressman does not believe in a bill his party is voting for, he had better vote for it or he might get kicked off a committee he is on, or he might not get funding for re-election.

Congress also starts **special commissions** sometimes, like the Kefauver Commission to deal with the Mafia, or the Warren Commission that investigated the assassination of President Kennedy. However, Congress does not need a commission to conduct an investigation, either inside or outside of government. Congressional committees, like the court system, has a lot of power over regular Americans. They can investigate, subpoena people and records, and force people to answer questions. President Trump is currently being investigated by a congressional committee, as well as by the Department of Justice, for alleged "collusion" with the Russian government to influence the 2016 election.

**Exercise 2: Answer the following questions.**

1) What is the Vice President's job? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) What powers does the Speaker of the House have? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) What are the three branches of government, and what do they do? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) What are Checks and Balances? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) What do Majority and Minority in Congress mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) What does Bicameral Legislature mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) Describe how a bill becomes law. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8) If the President vetoes a bill, can it still become law? How? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9) If the President and the Vice President are killed, who becomes the President? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10) How many Senators does each state have? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11) What determines how many Representatives each state has? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



12) What are the Constitutional requirements for a man to run for President? \_\_\_\_\_

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13) What does the President's Cabinet do? \_\_\_\_\_

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14) If there is a tie in Congress, who casts the deciding vote? \_\_\_\_\_

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15) How many Supreme Court judges are there? \_\_\_\_\_

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16) How long does a Senator serve? \_\_\_\_\_

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17) How long does a President serve, and how many times can he be elected? \_\_\_\_\_

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18) How long does a Supreme Court justice serve? \_\_\_\_\_

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19) How many U.S. Senators are there right now? \_\_\_\_\_

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20) How does Congress limit the power of the President? \_\_\_\_\_

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21) How does the President limit the power of Congress? \_\_\_\_\_

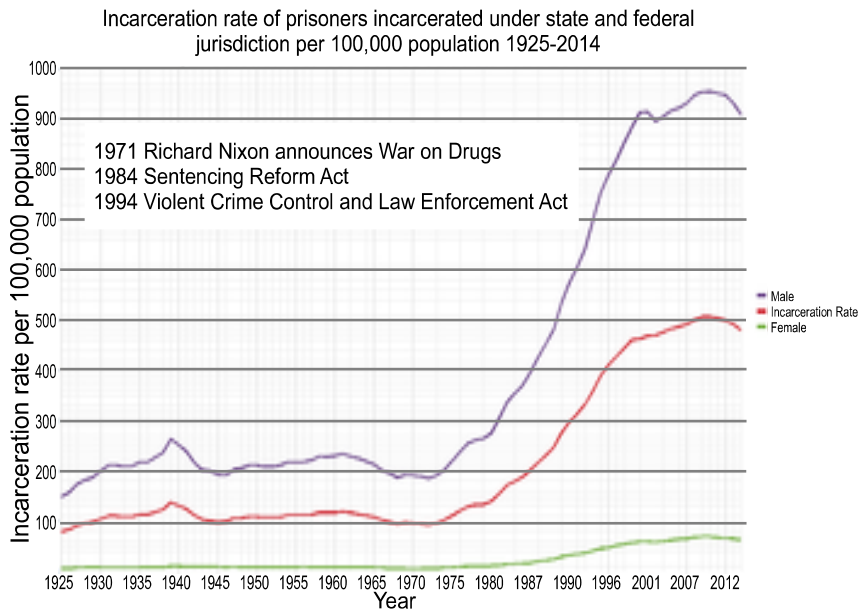
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22) How does the Supreme Court limit the power of the Congress? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Getting Serious About Criminal Justice

*News Currents*, April 11, 2016  
Social Studies/Reading Comprehension

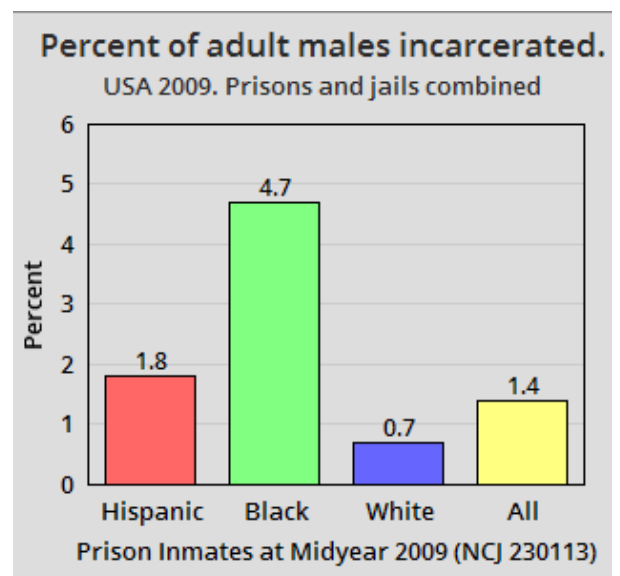


On March 30th of [2016], President Obama went out to dinner with former federal prisoners. During this dinner, the President asked these former prisoners how their lives had changed after having their sentences commuted. Earlier in the day, President Obama had commuted 61 federal sentences for non-violent drug offenders. This makes a total of 248 federal sentences that Obama has commuted during his seven years in office – more than the last six Presidents combined. [By October

26, 2016, when this article was last edited, that number had risen to 872 commutations.]

These commutations are part of a nationwide movement against the artificially long sentences handed down under mandatory minimum sentencing laws. While some Republican politicians and pundits have complained about these commutations, many people across the political spectrum are tired of mandatory minimum sentences. In fact, a lot of people want change all across the U.S. criminal justice system.

Today, the U.S. incarcerates more people than any other country in the world. According to the Bureau of Prison Statistics, more than 1.5 million people are currently serving time in federal and state prisons. This works out to 471 out of every 100,000 citizens, as you can see on the graph above. Experts say this growth in incarceration was fueled almost entirely by one movement. President Richard Nixon first declared the War on Drugs, which led to stiffer penalties for illegal drug use, possession and sales. In the 1980s, the War on Drugs gained force as a national policy. The first mandatory minimum sentencing laws were passed in 1984 during the term of President Reagan. These laws led to higher imprisonment rates for African Americans, and Hispanic Americans, especially men. However, the sharpest rise in incarceration came about in the 1990s. Federal and state prison populations rose by more



than 670,000 during Bill Clinton’s eight years in office; especially after the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994.

According to experts, the major effect of the “War on Drugs” has been an exponential rise in the U.S. Prison population – without significantly impacting drug use, and drug sales. According to some reports, 2/3 of arrests in the last 30 years have been of people with no history of violence, and are mostly for using or possessing drugs, not selling them. President Obama thinks incarceration rates have gotten out of control and wants this to change. Republican Senator Rand Paul has joined the President’s efforts to end or amend minimum mandatory sentencing.

Last year [2015], a bipartisan Senate committee met to talk about these important issues. The committee proposed a bill called the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2015. This bill calls for an end to mandatory minimum sentences, and increases funding for treatment facilities so that nonviolent drug users have more chance to avoid prison. But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has not yet even said if he will bring this act up for voting – or even debate – this year.

**Exercise 3: Answer the following questions.**

1) What does “federal” mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) What does the word “commute” mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Why are all these commutations for federal rather than state crimes? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) What do mandatory minimum sentencing laws say? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Why do the opponents of mandatory minimums think the laws are unfair? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) From the graph, what was the rate in 1965? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) What percent increase is this over 50 years? \_\_\_\_\_

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8) What was growth in incarceration fueled almost entirely by? \_\_\_\_\_

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9) Why do some advocates say the “War on Drugs” was discriminatory? \_\_\_\_\_

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10) How might the difference in how groups use and sell drugs affect arrest rates? \_\_\_\_\_

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11) What did you learn about the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994? \_\_\_\_\_

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12) How is ending or amending minimum mandatory sentencing consistent with conservative ideals? \_\_\_\_\_

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13) How well did you comprehend the article? Write a paragraph about what struck you most in this article: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Reading Nonfiction

Nonfiction can provide an intriguing look into the lives of famous people and events. In this lesson we will be working with an opinion piece from *The New York Times*. An opinion piece is an **editorial** article from a writer other than the paper's editor. Editorials are one of the nonfiction writing categories dealt with in the Language Arts section of the HiSET exam. An editorial is designed to showcase the author's particular stance on a topic. It may explore a topic in depth, but it also has a definite point of view and wants the reader to share it. Editorials could explore topics such as these:

- **Why a new local restaurant is worth visiting**
- **Who the most valuable NBA player is**
- **Why citizens should vote for the new bond measure**

## Vocabulary

Editorials are most often written by professional writers and will require you to have a good grasp of the English language. As you will not have use of a dictionary during the test, you need to work on your vocabulary now. You will also need to know how to pick up the meaning of certain words using **context clues**.

When you read, the clue to the meaning of a word may be the other words around it. This is called **verbal context**. The surrounding words in the sentence or the paragraph will help you to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

**Exercise 4: Underline the words below in the article that follows, then write what you think they mean from the context:**

**ebullient:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**isolationist:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**phenomenon:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**reluctant:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**opposition:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**unilaterally:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**conspire:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**charity:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**diversity:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**exhausted:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**treaties:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**deliberately:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**diplomat:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**memoirs:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Which Date Should Live in Infamy?

By **Jon Meacham** – The author, among other books, of  
*Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship.*

*The New York Times*, Sunday, December 11, 2016

Winston Churchill was ebullient; he thought it was all over at last. On the evening of Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941, hosting a small birthday dinner at Chequers, the prime minister's country retreat, for Kathleen Harriman, the daughter of the American diplomat W. Averell Harriman, Churchill heard the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor from the BBC. "At this very moment I knew the United States was in the war, up to the neck and in to the death," he wrote in his war memoirs. "So we had won after all!" After standing alone against Berlin since the German invasion of Poland on the first day of September 1939, struggling to engage an isolationist America, Churchill "slept the sleep of the saved and thankful." So the prevailing story of World War II goes even now, 75 years later. The attack on Pearl Harbor, an occasion of ceremonial remembrance commemorated once more last week, propelled the United States into the global contest against Japanese imperialism and European totalitarianism; within four years a once-isolationist America would achieve a superpower status from which it has yet to fall.

Yet the reality, as usual, is more complicated. The story of America's entry into World War II three-quarters of a century ago offers us a window into the contingencies of history and the perennial risk that the nation's isolationist tendencies – tendencies once more evident in our politics as the President-elect of the United States in 2016 revives the old slogan America First – can be durably potent even in moments of existential crisis.

In reaction to the bloodshed of World War I and to the cataclysm of the Great Depression – a global phenomenon – the United States spent the interwar years deeply skeptical of engagement overseas. Constricted by neutrality acts produced by isolationist sentiment and by the popular agitation of groups such as America First, Franklin D. Roosevelt was forced to maneuver carefully as the Nazi threat grew in Europe. For 27 months, from the invasion of Poland through the Battle of Britain, the fall of France, the U-boat war in the Atlantic and Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, America was the most reluctant of warriors.

With the news of Pearl Harbor, Churchill, who had long – and largely unsuccessfully – wooed Roosevelt, believed he now had a full partner in the war against the Axis. "He was quite naturally in a high state of excitement," noted Anthony Eden, the foreign secretary. Churchill was eager to travel to Washington to lay plans for Allied strategy. Eden, however, "was not sure that the Americans would want him so soon."

Eden was right. When Roosevelt dictated his speech declaring war on Japan to his secretary Grace Tully, it concerned only one nation: Japan. Cabinet members, including

Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, wanted F.D.R. to move against Hitler, but the President's political instincts told him to hold off. In a conversation with the British ambassador in Washington, Lord Halifax, Roosevelt was explicit about his concerns: "I seem to be conscious of a still lingering distinction in some quarters of the public between war with Japan and war with Germany."

Isolationist opinion about the Pacific had evaporated in the heat of Pearl Harbor; it was less certain whether Americans were willing to engage fully in Europe as well. From its national headquarters in Chicago, America First was disbanding and released a statement supporting war against Japan, but, as the historian Wayne S. Cole has written, the isolationist group's remarks were deliberately "phrased to leave the door open for possible continued opposition to participation in the European war."

From afar, frustrated by the Eastern Front, Hitler solved Roosevelt's problem by unilaterally declaring war on the United States on Thursday, Dec. 11.

Hitler's motives remain mysterious. He was bound to join Japan under the Tripartite Pact only if Japan had been attacked, and treaties never meant that much to the Führer in any event. The best historical thinking is that Hitler believed he could win the war against American shipping in the Atlantic if he had a free hand, and he apparently decided that Japan's bold stroke in the Pacific gave him the opening he needed to control the Atlantic.

And there was his grandiose vision of the destiny of National Socialism. "I understand only too well that a worldwide distance separates Roosevelt's ideas and my ideas," Hitler said in his speech declaring war. "Roosevelt comes from a rich family and belongs to the class whose path is smoothed in the democracies. I was the only child of a small, poor family and had to fight my way by work and industry." As for Germany, "It needs charity neither from Mr. Roosevelt nor from Mr. Churchill," he said. "It wants only its rights! It will secure for itself this right to live even if thousands of Churchills and Roosevelts conspire against it."

Hitler had badly misjudged Roosevelt's nation. "I don't see much future for the Americans," Hitler said in January 1942. "Everything about the behavior of American society reveals that it's half Judaized, and the other half Negrified. How can one expect a state like that to hold together?"

What Hitler saw as America's fatal weakness – our diversity – was of course the nation's ultimate strength. That he had to force America's hand by making his declaration of Dec. 11 before the United States could itself decide to make war on Nazi Germany is an uncomfortable reminder of the truth of an old observation attributed to the thankful Winston Churchill: One can always count on the Americans to do the right thing – after we've exhausted every other possibility.



**Exercise 5: Answer the following questions.**

1) What British office did Winston Churchill hold during World War II? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) On what date did the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor? \_\_\_\_\_

3) On what day did the Germans invade Poland? \_\_\_\_\_

4) “Contingencies” are what? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) A “cataclysm” is what? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6) What does “perennial” mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7) What does “existential” mean? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8) Who was President at the start of WWII? \_\_\_\_\_

9) What two other countries made up the Axis with Italy? \_\_\_\_\_

10) What two other countries made up the Allies with the Soviet Union? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11) Who was the British ambassador to the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_

12) Where was America First headquartered? \_\_\_\_\_

13) When did Hitler unilaterally declare war on the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_

14) What was the name of the pact between Japan and Germany? \_\_\_\_\_

15) What was the name of Hitler’s political party, often shortened to “Nazi”? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Answers and Explanations

**Exercise 1:** As per directions.

**Exercise 2:** 1) **What is the Vice President's job?** To meet with foreign dignitaries, represent the President, and break ties in Congress. 2) **What powers does the Speaker of the House have?** He is a Congressman who decides what bills get voted on and when. 3) **What are the three branches of government, and what do they do?** Executive – enforces the laws; Legislative – writes the laws; Judicial – interprets the laws. 4) **What are Checks and Balances?** How each branch of government keeps the others from taking over. 5) **What do Majority and Minority in Congress mean?** Majority – has the most members in their party; Minority – the other major party not in power. 6) **What does Bicameral Legislature mean?** Separated into two sections, or “houses” – in Congress it is the Senate and the House of Reps. 7) **Describe how a bill becomes law.** A bill is agreed on by both houses of Congress, then it is signed into law by the President. 8) **If the President vetoes a bill, can it still become law? How?** Yes, by a two-thirds vote of Congress. 9) **If the President and the Vice President are killed, who becomes the President?** The Speaker of the House. 10) **How many Senators does each state have?** Two. 11) **What determines how many Representatives each state has?** Population of that state. 12) **What are the Constitutional requirements for a man to run for President?** U.S. Natural-born citizen, 35 years old and on the ballot. 13) **What does the President's Cabinet do?** Run the various departments of the government. 14) **If there is a tie in Congress, who casts the deciding vote?** The Vice President, who presides over the Senate. 15) **How many Supreme Court judges are there?** Nine. 16) **How long does a Senator serve?** For a six-year terms, with no limit on reelections. 17) **How long does a President serve, and how many terms can he be elected?** For four years, with a limit of two terms. 18) **How long does a Supreme Court justice serve?** For life, or until he or she decides to retire. 19) **How many U.S. Senators are there right now?** 100. 20) **How does Congress limit the power of the President?** Overrides vetoes, approves Supreme Court picks, impeaches and controls government expenditures. 21) **How does the President limit the power of Congress?** Vetoes bills, enforces (or doesn't) laws, executive actions and his “bully pulpit.” 22) **How does the Supreme Court limit the power of the Congress?** By overturning laws.

**Exercise 3:** 1) **What does “federal” mean?** In this context, related to the U.S. Government. 2) **What does the word “commute” mean?** In this case, to reduce a punishment or substitute it for another one. (Commute can also mean to travel from one place to another, as in “morning commute.”) 3) **Why are all these commutations for federal rather than state crimes?** The President can only pardon or commute federal crimes (the Governor is the executive office at the State level). 4) **What do mandatory minimum sentencing laws say?** They specify the minimum prison terms for certain federal crimes, taking away the ability of a judge or jury to make the decision. 5) **Why do the opponents of mandatory minimums think the laws are unfair?** Mandatory minimum sentencing laws do not take into account any individual factors that could

justify leniency. 6) From the graph, what was the rate in 1965? A little over 100 people per 100,000 population. 7) What percent increase is this over 50 years? More than 400 percent. 8) What was growth in incarceration fueled almost entirely by? The War on Drugs. 9) Why do some advocates say the “War on Drugs” was discriminatory? Because the overall rate of drug use is the same for minorities as it is for white people. 10) How might the difference in how groups do and sell drugs affect arrest rates? Answers will vary. 11) What do you learn about the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994? It added 50 new federal crimes and implemented the “Three Strikes, You’re Out” policy for felons. 12) How is ending or amending minimum mandatory sentencing consistent with conservative ideals? Some conservatives see mandatory minimum sentences as classic governmental overreach, taking power away from judges and juries. 13) Answers will vary.

**Exercise 4:** *Answers will vary, but they should reflect the following meanings –* **ebullient:** having or showing liveliness and enthusiasm. **isolationist:** a policy of national isolation by abstention from alliances and other international political and economic relations. **phenomenon:** a rare or significant fact or event. **reluctant:** feeling or showing aversion, hesitation, or unwillingness. **opposition:** the act of opposing, being against something. **unilaterally:** done or undertaken by one person or party. **conspire:** to join in a secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act. **charity:** generosity and helpfulness especially toward the needy or suffering. **diversity:** the inclusion of diverse people (as people of different races or cultures). **exhausted:** to try out the whole number of. **treaties:** a contract in writing between two or more political authorities (as states or sovereigns) formally signed by representatives duly authorized and usually ratified by the lawmaking authority of the state. **deliberately:** characterized by or resulting from careful and thorough consideration. **diplomat:** one employed or skilled in diplomacy. **memoirs:** an account of something noteworthy.

**Exercise 5:** 1) What British office did Winston Churchill hold during World War II? Prime Minister. 2) On what date did the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor? December 7, 1941. 3) On what day did the Germans invade Poland? September 1, 1939. 4) “Contingencies” are what? something liable to happen as an adjunct to or result of something else. 5) A “cataclysm” is what? an event that brings great (usually negative) changes. 6) What does “perennial” mean? persistent, enduring. 7) What does “existential” mean? grounded in existence or the experience of existence: empirical. 8) Who was President at the start of WWII? Franklin D. Roosevelt. 9) What two other countries made up the Axis with Italy? Japan and Germany. 10) What two other countries made up the Allies with the Soviet Union? the United States and Britain. 11) Who was the British ambassador to the U.S.? Lord Halifax. 12) Where was America First headquartered? Chicago. 13) When did Hitler unilaterally declare war on the U.S.? December 11, 1941. 14) What was the name of the pact between Japan and Germany? Tripartite Pact. 15) What was the name of Hitler’s political party, often shortened to “Nazi”? National Socialist.

# Covenant Concepts

A Church of God Prison Outreach

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