

SS.7.C.3.5 Low Level of Complexity Sample Item Explanation

Question	Which is the last step in amending the U.S. Constitution?	Identify the correct description of ratification in the constitutional amendment process.
A	The voters approve the amendment in a national election.	Incorrect – The voters do not vote to ratify constitutional amendments.
B	The president signs the amendment in a public ceremony.	Incorrect – The president does not vote to ratify constitutional amendments.
C	Three-fourths of the state legislatures ratify the amendment.	Correct – The U.S. Constitution provides for two methods of proposing and two methods of ratifying the U.S. Constitution. One way to ratify a constitutional amendment is for three fourths of the state legislatures to vote to support ratifying a constitutional amendment.
D	Two-thirds of both houses of Congress ratify the amendment.	Incorrect – Congress may <i>propose</i> constitutional amendments; it is up to the states to <i>ratify</i> amendments.



SS.7.C.3.5 Moderate Level of Complexity Sample Item Explanation

Question	<p>The passage below was written by U.S. Senator Barack Obama in his 2006 book, <i>The Audacity of Hope</i>.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>I see democracy as a conversation to be had...It provides us with a framework and rules, but all its machinery are designed to force us into a conversation.</p> </div> <p>Based on the passage, which statement about the amendment process would Senator Obama support?</p>	<p>Read and analyze the passage. Predict how Senator Obama would describe the constitutional amendment process based on the evidence in the text.</p> <p>The passage must support the correct response.</p>
A	The ratification process allows the president to reflect public views.	Incorrect – The president does not participate in the amendment ratification process. The passage does not support this response.
B	The ratification process allows governors to reflect public views.	Incorrect – Governors do not participate in the amendment ratification process. The passage does not support this response.
C	The U.S. Constitution is difficult to amend.	Correct – The passage supports this response. The “machinery” of the amendment ratification process (“framework and rules”) forces those participating in the amendment process to think about and discuss proposed amendments (“force us into a conversation”) rather than quickly accepting or rejecting a proposed U.S. Constitutional change.
D	The U.S. Constitution is easy to amend.	Incorrect – The passage does not support this response. Obama refers to the “machinery” and “rules” that “force” proposed amendments to be examined carefully and not to quickly accept or reject them.



SS.7.C.3.5 High Level of Complexity Sample Item Explanation

Question	<p>The passage below is from an 1848 speech by Elizabeth Cady Stanton.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>In the United States of America women [are] unrepresented in this government—our rights and interests wholly overlooked.</p> </div> <p>Source: Public Domain</p> <p>Based on the passage, which action in the modern political system would Elizabeth Cady Stanton support?</p>	<p>Read and analyze the passage. Using evidence from the text, choose the response that describes a political action with which Stanton would likely agree.</p>
A	amending the U.S. Constitution to extend suffrage	<p>Correct – The 19th Amendment, ratified in 1920, guaranteed women’s suffrage (the right to vote). Stanton claimed women’s interests were ignored (“overlooked”) because their concerns were not represented in government. If women were able to vote for their representatives, those elected officials would pay attention to women’s concerns.</p>
B	amending the U.S. Constitution to guarantee due process	<p>Incorrect – Due process guarantees fair legal procedures associated with the justice system; due process does not guarantee equal political representation.</p>
C	Congress enacting a law limiting freedom of speech rights	<p>Incorrect – There is no information in the passage to support this response. Stanton’s passage indicates that she wants women to be represented in government and wants their rights to be protected. Laws limiting freedom of speech would not expand rights.</p>
D	Congress enacting a law limiting freedom of association rights	<p>Incorrect – There is no information in the passage to this response. Stanton’s quote indicates that she wants women to be represented in government and wants their rights to be protected. Laws limiting freedom of association would not expand rights.</p>

