



CONSTITUTIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR POLITICAL OFFICE

SS.7.CG.2.7 Identify the constitutional qualifications required to hold state and national office.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- Updated from SS.7.C.2.9
 - Changed from “~~Evaluate candidates for political office by analyzing their qualifications, experience, issue-based platforms, debates, and political ads.~~” to “Identify the constitutional qualifications required to hold state and national office.”
- Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark
 - Changed from “Evaluate” to “Identify”
- Benchmark Clarification Changes
 - Deletion of “Students will identify the constitutional requirements to run for federal political office.” and added as the benchmark
 - Changed from “Students will recognize ~~the requirements to run for~~ state and local political offices.” to “Students will recognize the qualifications to seek election to local and state political offices.”
 - Deletion of “Students will be able to analyze and/or evaluate the qualifications of candidates for public office based on their experience, platforms, debates, and political advertisements.”
- Vocabulary Changes
 - Deletion of: experience, issue-based platforms, debates, political ads

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. The Constitutional Qualifications to Run for National Political Office
2. The Qualifications to Run for State and Local Political Office

1. The Constitutional Qualifications to Run for National Political Office

The U.S. Constitution outlines the qualifications to run for national office including the president and Congress. These qualifications differ based on citizenship requirements, age and residency. Below is a table of constitutional requirements for running for national office.

Name of Office	Citizenship Requirements	Age	Residency	Notes
President	Natural-born citizen	35	14 years in the U.S.	The Constitution does not outline the qualifications for vice-president although the vice-president must possess the same qualifications as the president since the vice-president takes office upon the president's death, resignation or removal, or becomes acting president upon the president's incapacitation.
U.S. Senate	Natural-born or naturalized citizen for at least 9 years	30	Must reside in the state that they represent	States may decide how to replace Senators who leave office due to death, resignation or removal. Options include appointment or special election. Senators may be appointed until such time that a special election may be held. If there is less than two years left until the next election, the appointment may last until the end of the term. If that doesn't happen, then the appointment will take place until the next scheduled congressional election. For example, Tim Scott from South Carolina, who was appointed by Nikki Haley to replace Jim DeMint, ran in a special election in 2014 even though DeMint was last elected for a 6 year term in 2010.

U.S. House of Representatives	Natural-born or naturalized citizen for at least 7 years	25	Must reside in the state that they represent	Members of the U.S. House of Representatives may only be replaced with special elections because the U.S. Constitution requires that “the People of the several States (spelling in original)” choose members of the House of Representatives (Article I, Section 2).
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Notes:

- A. These are the qualifications to hold office. Still, there may be unusual circumstances when a candidate is not qualified to take office due to age or residency at the time that he or she files their candidacy although the candidate will meet the qualifications by the time that he or she takes office.
- B. It is a common misconception that members of the U.S. House of Representatives must live in their districts in order to represent those districts; members of the U.S. House of Representatives must only live in the state in which their district is located.

2. The Qualifications to Run for State and Local Political Office

The Florida Constitution outlines the qualifications to run for state office including the governor and the state legislature. These qualifications differ based on age and residency. Below is a table of constitutional qualifications for running for state office.

Name of Office	Citizenship Requirements	Age	Residency
Governor	Natural-born or naturalized citizen	30	7 years in Florida
State senator	Natural-born or naturalized citizen	21	2 years in Florida; resident of the district being represented
State legislator (House of Representatives)	Natural-born or naturalized citizen	21	2 years in Florida; resident of the district being represented

Notes:

- A. These are the qualifications to hold office. Still, there may be unusual circumstances when a candidate is not qualified to take office due to age or residency at the time that he or she files their candidacy although the candidate will meet the qualifications by the time that he or she takes office.
- B. County and city charters outline the elected offices in those political units including minimum qualifications and residency qualification to hold those offices.
- C. No person may hold elective office in Florida unless they are a Florida elector (eligible to vote in Florida including at least age 18 and registered to vote in Florida).

Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
What are the constitutional qualifications to run for political office at the national and state level? What are the qualifications to seek election to local and state political offices?		
BENCHMARK		
SS.7.CG.2.7 Identify the constitutional qualifications required to hold state and national office.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will understand the constitutional qualifications to run for political office at the national, state, and local level.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will recognize the qualifications to seek election to local and state political offices. 		
BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS		
N/A		
CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> candidate, charter, elector, natural born citizen, political office, political official, qualifications, requirement 		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Close reading of complex text	Collaborative Learning	Scenario Based Learning
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page protectors or lamination Plastic zip bags or envelopes 5x7 index cards (1 per student) U.S. Constitution Article II Excerpt slide Constitutional Qualifications for Political Office activity sheet Florida Voter Registration Application (external link) Qualifications for Office Card Sort Candidate Sample slides 		
B.E.S.T. STANDARDS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELA.7.R.2.1- Explain how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose in texts. ELA.7.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts. 		

- ELA.7.C.1.2 - Write personal or fictional narratives using narrative techniques, varied transitions, and a clearly established point of view.
- ELA.7.C.1.5 - Improve writing by planning, revising, and editing, considering feedback from adults and peers.
- ELA.12.V.1.1 - Integrate academic vocabulary appropriate to grade level in speaking and writing.
- ELA.V.1.3- Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To begin this lesson, place students into pairs and project the “U.S. Constitution Article II Excerpt” slide. 2. Ask students to write this statement in their own words and try to fill in the blank. 3. Have students share their responses. 4. Ask students to define the term ‘natural born citizen’ (someone who was born in the U.S. or born to U.S. citizen parents). 5. Lead students to the understanding that they are looking at the constitutional qualifications required to seek election to the Office of President. 6. Pass out the “Constitutional Qualifications for Political Office” activity sheet. 7. Explain to students that their task will be to read each excerpt, identify the political office that is being described, and to list the required constitutional qualifications for that office based on what they read. 8. Model this with the whole-class, using Box 3, the constitutional qualifications for president. 9. Instruct students to work with their partner to complete the rest of the activity sheet and stop when they get to the Florida Statute box (Box 6). 10. Once completed, ask students to list some of the political offices they have read about and share out any offices that they have not read about. Lead students to the understanding that they have not yet read about local offices. 11. Read aloud the ‘Florida Statute Title IX, Chapter 99: Candidates’ box on the activity sheet and ask the students to summarize what they have heard in the ‘Summary of Text’ box below (all candidates, except judicial, have to take an oath qualifying them as a candidate for the office they are seeking). 12. Instruct students to read the candidate oath with their partner and summarize the qualifications for a candidate in the ‘Summary of Text’ box below the oath. 13. Ask students to share what they summarized from the oath. 14. Ask a student to define the term ‘elector’. If needed, break the word into parts (elect and -or) and explain that the suffix –or means ‘one who’. 15. Ask the students to explain what is required to be an elector in Florida. 16. Project a “Florida Voter Registration Application” and ask students to point out any required information to be a registered voter. Instruct the students to take notes in the ‘Definition of Florida Elector’ box. 17. Explain to students that the minimum common qualification to be a candidate for local offices in Florida includes being at least 18, registered to vote, signing the candidate oath and paying filing fees. Counties and cities may have additional political party affiliation paperwork and/or residential or age qualification to run for certain offices.

DAY 2	<p>Planning Note: Prior to today’s lesson you will need to prepare the materials for the “Qualifications for Office Card Sort” activity. The first page has more directions. It is recommended you use lamination or page protectors and place the cards in envelopes or zip bags so they last from class to class. You will also need to prep the index cards listed in step 9 below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If your school has a student government, list the required qualifications to run for an office position on the board. Ask the students if any of the qualifications should be removed or added. If your school does not have a student government, ask the students: If we were to
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start a student government, what should the required qualifications be to run for a student government office position?

2. Provide students with time to brainstorm and then share out.
3. Lead students to an understanding that in the U.S. Constitution, the Framers outlined required qualifications candidates must have in order to seek election to national government offices. The Florida Constitution outlines the qualifications to run for state offices such as governor, state representative, and state senator. Local governments outline these qualifications in their charters. Remind students that this was the information contained in yesterday's activity sheet. Explain to students that they may one day help to create a set of required qualifications for an office if they are part of a company or a homeowners association. These examples help them see that government is a part of their everyday lives.
4. Place students into groups of 3-5 for the day's "Qualifications for Office Card Sort".
5. Give each group an envelope/bag of fact cards and a set of the five base cards.
6. Have students lay out the base cards.
7. Have students deal out the fact cards as evenly as possible amongst the group members.
8. Each student in the group should take a turn as a leader. When it is their turn, they should read their fact card out loud to the group. After reading the card, all group members should discuss where the card should be placed. If group members disagree, the group leader decides where to place it. Repeat this process until all group members have a turn as a leader and all cards have been placed.
Teacher Note: Do one example for the class. Have the students repeat the directions back and clarify as needed. Remind the students of the expectation of equal participation from each group member when they are the leader and while others are leading. When all cards are placed, they should signal the teacher to come over to that group. The teacher has two options. 1) Pull out the incorrect cards and ask them to try again. 2) Allow the group to check their answers by getting out their notes.
9. Once all groups have successfully completed the card sort, give each student in the class a 5x7 index card that has one of the following words on the unlined side:
 - President
 - U.S. Representative
 - U.S. Senator
 - State Representative
 - State Senator
 - Governor
 - County Commissioner
10. Tell the students that they will be crafting a fictitious biography to describe a person/candidate that meets all of the constitutional qualifications required to seek election to the office that is on their card.
11. Tell the students that they will also be writing a fictitious biography to describe a person/candidate that does not meet the constitutional qualifications required to seek election to the office that is on their card.
12. Show students the "Candidate Sample" slide to model the activity.
13. With any remaining class time, allow the students to use their "Constitutional Qualifications for Political Office" activity sheet to start brainstorming their biographies.

DAY 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As class begins, review with students what is required on their index card for the ‘Create a Candidate’ activity. Re-share the “Candidate Sample” slide. 2. Give students time to write. 3. When students complete the work, collect the biographies for a whole-class formative assessment activity. 4. Choose a few examples and non examples for each office to share with the class. Using steps 5-9, see if students can tell if the person’s biography that is being read meets the constitutional qualifications to seek election to the political office on the card. 5. Ensure all students are seated. 6. Read the name of the office and the fictitious biography that you have chosen. 7. Provide thinking time before cueing students to stand up if they think the candidate is qualified to seek election to that office, or remain seated if they think the candidate does not meet the constitutional qualifications to be elected to that office. <i>(Optional) Pair students for brief conversations about why they responded as they did. ‘When I say go, tell your partner why you think this person is eligible or ineligible to run for this office. You will each have 30 seconds each to explain. Go.’</i> 8. Tell students the correct answer and why it is correct. Teacher Note: This gives you a great visual on what percentage of the students can identify the constitutional qualifications required of each office and any you may need to review. 9. Repeat for additional examples and nonexamples you have chosen. Teacher Note: Model proper behavior for standing and sitting. Remember to include wait time before cueing students to respond. In fact, consider prompting students to make their thinking visible by allowing them to write out their reasoning first. Completing a quick write helps engage students in thinking about a topic. 10. To conclude, have students complete an individual check for understanding (Formative Assessment): Instruct students to write a well-crafted informative response using the following prompt: <u>Prompt:</u> If you could create a constitutional amendment to change the qualifications required to seek the office of U.S. President, what would you add or delete? Why?
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Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
candidate	a person running for political office
charter	a legal document giving certain rights to a person or company
elector	a person who has the right to vote in an election
natural born citizen	someone who was born in the U.S. or born to U.S. citizens
political office	a position for which a candidate is elected to hold
political official	a person holding an elected office
qualification	a special skill, knowledge, or ability that enables a person to perform a particular job
requirement	something necessary

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- N/A

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: Constitutional Qualifications for Political Office activity sheet

Sample Answers: Qualifications for Office Card Sort

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

SOURCES

U.S. Constitution: <https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/full-text>

Florida Constitution: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Constitution>

Florida Statutes:

<http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?Mode=View%20Statutes&Submenu=1&Tab=statutes&CFID=283734290&CFTOKEN=24450055>

Florida Division of Elections: <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections> - Accessed January 2023

Florida Voter Application: <https://eforms.com/voter-registration/florida/>