

Reading Practice Drill #1

Impeachment

→ Under the Constitution, the House of Representatives has the power to impeach a government official, in effect serving as prosecutor. The Senate then holds the impeachment trial, essentially serving as jury and judge, except in the impeachment of a president when the chief justice presides. The president, vice president, and all civil officers of the United States are subject to impeachment; conviction means automatic removal from office.

→ The concept of impeachment originated in England and was adopted by many of the American colonial governments and state constitutions. At the Constitutional Convention, the framers considered several possible models before deciding that the Senate should try impeachments. Since 1789, only 17 federal officers have been impeached by the House, 14 of which were tried by the Senate. Three were dismissed before trial because the individual had left office, 7 ended in acquittal and 7 in conviction. All of those convicted were federal judges.

→ Impeachment is a very serious affair. It is perhaps the most awesome power of Congress, the ultimate weapon it wields against officials of the federal government. The House of Representatives is the prosecutor. The Senate chamber is the courtroom. The Senate is the jury and also the judge, except in the case of a presidential impeachment trial when the chief justice presides. The final penalty is removal from office. There is no appeal.

So grave is this power of impeachment, and so conscious is the Congress of this solemn power, that impeachment proceedings have been initiated in the House only sixty-two times since 1789. Only seventeen federal officers have been impeached: two presidents, one cabinet officer, one senator and thirteen federal judges. Sixteen cases have reached the Senate. Of these, two were dismissed before trial because the individuals had left office, seven ended in acquittal, and seven in conviction. Each of the seven Senate convictions has involved a federal judge.

The American colonial governments and early state constitutions followed the British pattern of trial before the upper legislative body on charges brought by the lower house. Despite these precedents, a major controversy arose at the Constitutional Convention about whether the Senate should act as the court of impeachment. Opposing that role for the Senate, James Madison and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney asserted that it would make the president too dependent on the legislative branch. They suggested, as alternative trial bodies, the Supreme Court or the chief justices of the state supreme courts. Hamilton and others argued, however, that such bodies would be too small and susceptible to corruption. In the end, after much wrangling, the framers selected the Senate as the trial forum.

There was also considerable debate at the convention in Philadelphia over the definition of impeachable crimes. In the original proposals, the president was to be removed on impeachment and conviction "for mal or corrupt conduct," or for "malpractice or neglect of duty." Later, the wording was changed to "treason, bribery, or corruption," then to "treason or bribery" alone. A final revision defined impeachable crimes as "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors."

In the Constitution, the House is given the "sole power of impeachment." To the Senate is given "sole power to try all impeachments." Impeachments may be brought against "the President, Vice President, and all civil officers of the United States." Conviction is automatically followed by "removal from office."

While the framers very clearly envisaged the occasional necessity of initiating impeachment proceedings, they put in place only a very general framework. ■ They left many questions open to differences of opinion and many details to be filled in. ■ Despite the open-endedness, as Peter Charles Hoffer and N.E.H. Hull note in their book *Impeachment in America 1635-1805*, thanks to the framers: a tool used in Parliament to curb kings and punish placemen was molded into an efficient legislative check upon executive and judicial wrongdoing. ■ The power of the English House of Commons to impeach anyone, for almost any alleged offense, was restrained; the threat of death and forfeiture upon conviction was lifted; and the interference of the Commons and the House of Lords with the regular courts of justice was limited. ■ American impeachment law shifted, at first inadvertently and then deliberately, from the orbit of English precedent to a native republican course. Federal constitutional provisions for impeachment reflected indigenous experience and revolutionary tenets instead of English tradition

1. The word power in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - (A) motivation
 - (B) desire
 - (C) bearing
 - (D) authority
2. According to paragraph 1, what three roles do the House of Representatives and Senate play in the impeachment process?
 - (A) government official, jury, judge
 - (B) prosecutor, jury, judge
 - (C) president, prosecutor, judge
 - (D) civil officers, jury, prosecutor

Paragraph 1 is marked with an arrow [→]

3. In paragraph 2, the author explains that the idea of impeachment began
 - (A) at the Constitutional Convention
 - (B) in 1789
 - (C) in England
 - (D) in colonial governments

Paragraph 2 is marked with an arrow [→]

4. What can be inferred from paragraph 2 about the decision to impeach a government official?

- (A) the decision made in the Senate
- (B) impeachment results in removal from office
- (C) impeachment occurs often
- (D) impeachment rarely occurs

Paragraph 2 is marked with an arrow [→]

5. The word *wields* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) uses
- (B) maintains
- (C) formulates
- (D) shapes

6. In paragraph 3, the author explains that during the impeachment of a president

- (A) a chief justice presides
- (B) the senate presides
- (C) the house of representatives presides
- (D) Congress presides

Paragraph 3 is marked with an arrow [→]

7. According to paragraph 3, how many impeachment proceedings have been initiated since 1789?

- (A) seventeen
- (B) two
- (C) sixty-two
- (D) sixteen

Paragraph 3 is marked with an arrow [→]

8. The word *precedents* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) charges
- (B) statutes
- (C) examples
- (D) claims

9. According to the passage, the impeachment process incorporates

- (A) the House of Representatives and the Senate
- (B) the Senate and the President
- (C) a Chief Justice and the House of Representatives
- (D) a Chief Justice and the Senate

10. Which of the sentences below best express the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.

There was also considerable debate at the convention in Philadelphia over the definition of impeachable crimes.

- (A) Philadelphians debated considerably over the definition of impeachable crimes.
- (B) Formidable debate occurred at the convention in Philadelphia concerning the meaning of impeachable crimes.
- (C) Impeachable crimes were debated at the convention in Philadelphia.
- (D) The classification of impeachable crimes was a significant debate at the Philadelphia convention.

11. ALL of the following are mentioned as part of the final definition of impeachment EXCEPT

- (A) corruption
- (B) misdemeanors
- (C) bribery
- (D) treason

12. The word *initiating* in the passage is closest in meaning to

- (A) concluding
- (B) starting
- (C) deciding
- (D) forming

13. Look at the four squares [■] that indicate where the following sentence could be added to the passage.

Consequently, the American version of impeachment was clearly quite different than the English version upon which it was based.

Where would the sentence best fit?

Click on a square [■] to add the sentence to the passage.

14. Directions: An introductory sentence for a brief summary of the passage is provided below. Complete the summary by selecting the THREE answer choices that express the most important ideas in the passage. Some sentences do not belong in the summary because they express ideas that are not presented in the passage or are minor ideas in the passage.

The power of impeachment was initiated during the Constitutional Convention as a means to try government officials who do not act according to the law.

Answer Choices

Sixty-two trials of impeachment have occurred since 1789.	The impeachment process is initially brought forth by the House of Representatives, and it is tried before the Senate.
A chief justice presides over the hearing of presidential impeachment, and this is the only instance in which the Senate is not the judge.	If a government official is convicted subsequent to impeachment, he/she is automatically removed from office.
The power to impeach is taken very seriously by Congress and very few government officials have been impeached.	The definition of impeachable crimes was an important component of the Constitutional Convention; nevertheless, the language defining remains decidedly vague.

Reading Practice Drill #2

Calligraphy

The art of calligraphy as we know it today actually finds its origins in cave paintings. Back in the days when communication was a series of grunts, the written word was a mere pictorial representation of significant events in a caveman's life. As humans developed, the art of drawing pictures became quite highly developed and reached great heights under the direction of the Egyptians. About 3500 B.C.E., the Egyptians created the highly stylized hieroglyphics for which they are so well known. These symbols were incised inside tombs or painted with brushes across papyrus paper. A few thousand years later, around 1000 B.C.E., the Phoenicians went a step further and developed what is believed to be one of the first alphabets and writing systems. Luckily the Phoenicians were seafaring types and they readily passed along their new talents to every seaport through which they passed. They most likely influenced the Greeks who later developed their own form of writing which by 850 B.C.E. the Romans had adapted to suit the Latin language.

→ It just so happens that Latin was the lingua franca of the churches of Europe in the Middle Ages and the monks (and a sprinkling of nobility) constituted the only literate members of society. Since nothing could be more glorious than the word of God, the monks began to carefully scribe ancient texts into decorative books used by high-ranking church members and royalty. Paper was expensive during the Middle Ages, so scribing monks developed a writing style that was narrower allowing more words to fit on a single line. This style came to be known as Gothic and lasted as a popular scribing technique throughout much of the Middle Ages.

By the mid-15th century, however, Johannes Gutenberg had invented the printing press based upon the Gothic lettering of the monks. This new technique allowed for faster printing of Bibles and threatened the *métier* of the monks. Although the use of the printing press spread worldwide, handwriting skills were still in high demand. The bulky printing press was too coarse for everyday letters, formal correspondence and invitations. As the arts flourished during Europe's Renaissance, so too did the art of calligraphy. Italians during this time invented the italic script, which became popular throughout most of Europe. But calligraphers were threatened once again with the advent of engraved copperplates in the 17th century, which permitted the printing of finer lines more attuned to italic script. One hundred years later, artistic penmanship was in a steep decline.

■ To further complicate matters for artistic scribes, by the 19th century the steel pen and fountain pen replaced the flat-edged pen. ■ The rounded tip of these new pens made the special curves of calligraphy more difficult to achieve. ■ The art itself might have seen its extinction if it weren't for the British poet and artist William Morris. In the mid-19th century William Morris spearheaded a calligraphic revival, reintroducing the flat edged pen and elevating the act of writing to the art form of its past. ■

It might appear that the art of calligraphy couldn't possibly withstand the competition from the 20th century's most important invention—the computer. With a click of the mouse, a list of various scripts are generated electronically and lasered onto bleached paper in an instant—the art of script preserved in an electronic pulse. But calligraphy is flourishing more than ever with calligraphic societies throughout the United States and Europe. According to noted calligrapher Julian Waters during a lecture at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C. in 1997, true calligraphy is the art of producing letters that capture the spirit of the text they represent. For many artists, much mental pre-planning is necessary to fully understand the text before deciding how to display it in its full beauty. This type of emotion can not always be generated from a computer, which for Julian Waters is 'simply another tool' to be manipulated by the artist.