

## Very Short Answer Questions

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**Q.1. Why do we have representative government in most democracies?**

**Ans.** In most democracies, people rule through their representatives. Since it is not possible for everyone to have time and knowledge to take decisions on all matters, representation is needed.

**Q.2. What is the mechanism by which people can choose their representatives and change them if they wish to?**

**Ans.** The mechanism is 'elections'.

**Q.3. How are voters' choices fulfilled by elections?**

**Ans.** Voters can choose their law makers, their representatives who can take major decisions of the government and can also choose the particular political party whose policies are the best.

**Q.4. How political parties can contribute in a condition to democratic election?**

**Ans.** There should be something to choose from. Parties and candidates should be free to contest elections and should offer real choices to the voters. Elections must be held after every few years.

**Q.5. What kind of competition is offered to the people for elections?**

**Ans.** The most obvious form is the competition among political parties. At the constituency level, it takes the form of competition among several candidates. If there is no competition, elections will be pointless.

**Q.6. Give any two demerits of Electoral Competition.**

**Ans. (i)** It creates a sense of disunity and factionalism in every locality.

**(ii)** Pressure to win electoral fights does not allow sensible long-term policies to be formulated.

**Q.7. How can political leaders be made accountable to the people?**

**Ans.** It can be done by setting up a system where political leaders are rewarded for serving the people and punished for not doing good for the sake of people. Regular electoral competition should be held through elections.

**Q.8. How are general elections held in India?**

**Ans.** For Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha, elections are held after every five years. After five years the term of all the elected representatives comes to an end. This is called 'general elections'. They are held in all constituencies at the same time.

**Q.9. What are By Elections?**

**Ans.** When elections are held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by death or resignation of a member, they are called By Elections.

**Q.10. What are Electoral Constituencies?**

**Ans.** The country is divided into different areas for ease in purpose of representation. These areas are called 'electoral constituencies'.

**Q.11. How many constituencies do we have for Lok Sabha?**

**Ans.** For Lok Sabha elections the country is divided into 543 constituencies.

**Q.12. What is an elected representative from the constituency is called?**

**Ans.** The representative elected from each constituency is called a Member of Parliament or an MP.

**Q.13. How many seats are reserved for SC & ST in Lok Sabha?**

**Ans.** Currently in the Lok Sabha, 79 seats are reserved for the scheduled caste and 41 for the scheduled tribe.

**Q.14. How many seats are reserved for women at local bodies?**

**Ans.** One third of the total seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for women candidates.

**Q.15. What is the principle of universal adult franchise?**

**Ans.** It means that everyone should have one vote and each vote should have equal value. All the citizens aged 18 years and above have got the right to vote.

**Q.16. What is the Election Photo Identity Card System?**

**Ans.** Every voter is issued this photo identity card by the Election Commission. The voters are required to carry this card when they go out to vote, so that no one can vote for someone else.

**Q.17. What is a party ticket?**

**Ans.** Political parties nominate their candidates who get the party symbol and support. This party's nomination is often called the party 'ticket'.

**Q.18. What are the legal declarations of a party candidate?**

**Ans.** Details of assets and liabilities of the candidate and his or her family and educational qualifications of the candidate.

**Q.19. Why has personal information of a candidate to be made public?**

**Ans.** This information needs to be made public as it provides an opportunity to the voters to make their decisions on the basis of the information provided by the candidates.

**Q.20. What is the time period of campaigning for elections?**

**Ans.** In our country, such campaigns take place for a two-week period between the announcement of the final list of candidates and the date of polling.

**Q.21. What is a ballot paper?**

**Ans.** A ballot paper is a sheet of paper on which the names of the contesting candidates along with party name and symbols are issued.

**Q.22. What is EVM?**

**Ans.** EVM is an electronic voting machine, which is used to record votes.

**Q.23. How is a vote cast on EVM?**

**Ans.** The machine shows the names of the candidates and the party symbols. All the voter has to do is to press the button against the name of the candidate he or she wants to give vote.

**Q.24. What do you know about 'Election Commission'?**

**Ans.** In our country, elections are conducted by an independent and very powerful election commission. It enjoys the same kind of independence that the judiciary enjoys.

**Q.25. What do you mean by 'Turn out'?**

**Ans.** Turn out indicates the percent of eligible voters who actually cast their vote.

**Q.26. Why do common people in India attach a lot of importance to elections?**

**Ans.** They feel that through elections they can bring pressure on political parties to adopt policies and programmes favourable to them.

**Q.27. Give any one challenge of Indian Elections.**

**Ans.** Some families tend to dominate political parties; tickets are distributed to relatives from the families.

**Q.28. What is 'booth capturing'?**

**Ans.** Supporters or hired muscle men of a party or a candidate gain physical control of a polling booth and cast false votes by threatening everyone or by preventing genuine voters from reaching the polling booth.

## Short Answer Questions

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### **Q.1. Give any two merits of Electoral Competition.**

**Ans. (i)** Political leaders are motivated by the desire to advance their political careers.

**(ii)** They want to come in power and retain positions for themselves. So they do their best to win the hearts of people.

### **Q.2. Why are election campaigns needed?**

**Ans.** The main purpose of elections is to give people a chance to choose the representatives, the government and the policies they prefer. Therefore, it is necessary to have a free and open discussion about who is a better representative, which party will make a better government or what is a good policy. It is possible during election campaigns.

### **Q.3. What choices are given to a voter during elections?**

**Ans. (i)** They can choose who will make laws for them.

**(ii)** They can choose who will form the government and take major decisions.

**(iii)** They can choose the party whose policies will guide the government and law-making.

### **Q.4. What forms does political competition take during elections?**

**Ans.** Political competition takes various forms such as:

**(i)** The most obvious form is the competition among political parties.

**(ii)** At the constituency level, it takes the form of competition among several candidates.

**(iii)** If there is no competition, elections will become pointless.

### **Q.5. How does electoral competition help the political parties and leaders to win the elections?**

**Ans. (i)** Regular electoral competitions provide incentives to political parties and leaders.

**(ii)** They know that if they raise issues that people want to be raised, their popularity and chances of victory will increase in the next elections.

**(iii)** But if they fail to satisfy the voters with their work, they will not be able to win again.

**Q.6. What is the 'Voters' List'?**

**Ans.(i)** In a democratic election, the list of those who are eligible to vote is prepared much before the election and is available to everyone.

**(ii)** This list is officially called the Electoral Roll and is commonly known as the Voters' List.

**(iii)** This is an important step as it is linked to the first condition of a democratic election.

**Q.7. How does the principle of 'Universal Adult Franchise' work in the Indian democracy?**

**OR**

**Which section of our country's population is eligible to vote?**

**Ans. (i)** Universal adult franchise means that everyone should have one vote and each vote should have equal value. No one should be denied the right to vote without good reason.

**(ii)** In India, all citizens aged 18 years and above can vote in an election.

**(iii)** Every citizen has the right to vote, regardless of caste, religion, and gender.

**(iv)** Some criminals and persons with an unsound mind can be denied the right to vote, but only in rare situations.

**(v)** Every five years, complete revision of the voters' list takes place so that the names of the new voters who have attained the voting age are included and names of those who have moved to some other place or are dead can be deleted.

**Q.8. What is the outcome of free and fair elections held in India?**

**Ans. (i)** The ruling parties routinely lose elections in India, both at the national and state levels.

**(ii)** In India, about half of the sitting MPs or MLAs lose elections.

**(iii)** Candidates who are known to have spent a lot of money in 'buying votes' and those with criminal connections often lose elections.

**(iv)** Barring very few disputed elections, the electoral outcomes are usually accepted as the people's verdict by the defeated party.

**Q.9. Mention any three powers and functions of the Election Commission of India.**

**Ans.** Powers and Functions of Election Commission of India:

- (i)** To conduct and control the elections.
- (ii)** To implement the code of conduct.
- (iii)** To order the government to follow guidelines.
- (iv)** To prevent use and misuse of government machinery at the time of election.

**Q.10. How do general elections differ from by-elections?**

**Ans.** When elections are held in all the constituencies at the same time, either on the same day or within few days, this is called general elections.

Sometimes, election is held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by death or resignation of a member. This is called a by-election.

**Q.11. How are constituencies for Lok Sabha decided by the Election Commission?**

**Ans. (i)** For Lok Sabha elections, the country is divided into 543 constituencies.

**(ii)** The representative elected from each constituency is called a Member of Parliament or an MP.

**(iii)** One of the features of a democratic election is that every vote should have equal value.

That is why, our constitution requires that each constituency should have a roughly equal population living within it.

**Q.12. How is division of constituencies done at the state level?**

**Ans. (i)** Each state is divided into a specific number of Assembly constituencies on the basis of their population size.

**(ii)** In this case, the elected representative is called Member of Legislative Assembly or an MLA.

**(iii)** Each parliamentary constituency has several assembly constituencies within it.

**Q.13. How has reservation system been extended to other weaker sections?**

**Ans. (i)** Initially, constituencies were reserved only for people belonging to SC and ST but later on, it was extended to other weaker sections at district and local level.

**(ii)** In many states, seats in rural and urban local bodies are now reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as well.

**(iii)** However, the proportion of seats reserved varies from state to state. Similarly, one-third of the seats are reserved in rural and urban local bodies for women candidates.

**Q.14. What do you know about voter's ID card?**

**Ans. (i)** Voter's ID card is also called Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC).

**(ii)** The government makes efforts to give this card to every person on the voters' list.

**(iii)** The voters are required to carry this card when they go out to cast their vote, so that no one can vote for someone else.

**(iv)** But the card is not yet compulsory for voting. The voters can show many other proofs of identity like the ration card, driving licence or the passport, etc.

**Q.15. In what manner does the Election Commission monitor the election campaign?**

**Or**

**What is an Election Commission? What is its role in the elections?**

**Ans.** The Election Commission monitor the election in the following ways:

**(i)** It takes decisions on every aspect of conduct and control of elections from the announcement of elections to the declaration of the results.

**(ii)** It implements code of conduct and punishes the candidate or party that violates it.

**(iii)** During election period, the EC can order the government to follow some guidelines, to prevent use and misuse of governmental power to enhance its chances to win the elections, or to transfer some government officials.

**(iv)** When on election duty, government officers work under the control of the EC and not the government.

**Q.16. How can we check the quality of the election process?**

**Ans.** The quality of an election process can be checked in three ways:



**(i) Who Conducts the Election:** Indian elections are conducted by an independent Election Commission, which has the power to even reprimand the government and the administration for their lapses.

**(ii) Popular Participation:** If the election process is not free and fair, people do not participate in the electoral process. So, the turn-out of the election is also a way to check the quality of the election process.

**(iii) Acceptance of the outcome:** If the election is not free and fair, the outcome always favour the powerful and the losing party does not accept the outcome. So, to assess the quality of election process, one can check the response of the losing party.

### **Q.17. How are results declared after an election in our country?**

**Ans. (i)** A few days later after poll, on a fixed date, all the EVMs from a constituency are opened and the votes secured by each candidate are counted.

**(ii)** In general elections, usually the counting of votes in all the constituencies takes place at the same time, on the same day.

**(iii)** Television channels, radio and newspapers report this event. Within a few hours of counting, all the results are declared and it becomes clear as to who will form the next government.

### **Q.18. What does turnout figure indicate?**

**Ans. (i)** People's participation in election is usually measured by voters' turnout figure.

**(ii)** Turnout indicates the percentage of eligible voters who actually cast their vote.

**(iii)** It indicates the interest of voters in election related activities.

### **Q.19. Is it true that the interest of voters is increasing day by day in election-related activities?**

**Ans. (i)** The interest of voters in election-related activities has been increasing over the years.

**(ii)** During the 2004 elections, more than one-third voters took part in campaign-related activities.

**(iii)** More than half of the people identified themselves as being close to one or the other political party. One out of every seven voters is a member of a political party.

**Q.20. In what way does the outcome of elections matter to the people?**

**Ans. (i)** One final test of the free and fairness of the elections is in its outcome itself.

**(ii)** If elections are not free or fair, the outcome always favours the powerful. In such a situation, the ruling parties do not lose elections.

**(iii)** Usually, the losing party does not accept the outcome of a rigged elections.

**Q.21. How can you say that elections in India are free, fair and democratic?**

**OR**

**What is an Election Commission? Who appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and how can he/she be removed?**

**Ans. (i)** Elections in India are basically free and fair. The party that wins an election and forms government does so because people have chosen it over its rivals.

**(ii)** India has an independent Election Commission which regulates the election process. The Chief Election Commissioner is appointed by the President of India but after appointment, he is not answerable to anyone. It is virtually impossible to remove him. During election period, he can order the government to follow some guidelines to prevent it from misusing its power to enhance its chances of winning.

**(iii)** Once the polling is over, all EVMs are sealed and taken to a secure place. They are opened on a fixed day in the presence of agents of all the candidates for counting of the votes. Usually all the parties accept the electoral outcome.

**Q.22. What does booth capturing and rigging mean in the elections?**

**Ans. (i) Booth capturing:** Supporters or hired musclemen of party or a candidate gain physical control of a polling booth and cast false votes by threatening everyone or by preventing genuine voters from reaching the polling booth.

**(ii) Rigging:** Fraud and malpractices indulged by a party or candidate to increase his votes. It includes stuffing ballot boxes by a few persons using the votes of others; recording multiple votes by the same person; and bribing polling officers to favour a candidate.

**Q.23. Do you think that elections promote democracy?**

**Ans.** Yes, elections do promote democracy. They help people to choose candidates on the basis of one-vote-one-value. Parties are free to contest elections. Elections must be held at regular intervals. Further, candidates preferred by people only are elected. Besides, elections are free and fair.

**Q.24. How far is it good to have political competition? Give reasons.**

**Ans.** It is good to have political competition. In a democracy political leaders know what is good for the people. It motivates them to serve the people. Regular electoral competition provides an initiative to political parties and leaders. Leaders realise that if they raise and work for people's issues they would become popular and their chance to win would increase.

**Q.25. You visited an electoral booth and viewed malpractices being used to win the election. Can these malpractices be stopped? Give reasons.**

**Ans.** Yes, the malpractices related to election can be curbed. The Election Commission should ban people with criminal background from contesting election. Further, it should be mandatory for candidates to declare their assets and electoral malpractices or rigging should be checked.

**Q.26. Identify the reasons which make India a successful democracy in the world.**

**Ans. (i)** Free and fair elections are held.

**(ii)** Periodic elections are held.

**(iii)** Independent Election Commission exists to make elections free and fair.

## Long Answer Questions

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**Q.1. What are the minimum conditions for a democratic election?**

**OR**

**Do people have real choice in a democratic election?**

**Ans.** Minimum conditions for democratic elections are as follows:

- (i)** Everyone should be able to choose. This means that everyone should have one vote and every vote should have equal value.
- (ii)** Parties and candidates should be free to contest elections and should offer some real choice to the voters.
- (iii)** The choice should be offered at regular intervals. Elections must be held every few years.
- (iv)** The candidates preferred by the people should get elected.
- (v)** Elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner, where people can choose as they wish.

**Q.2. What are the merits and demerits of an electoral competition?**

**Ans. Merits:**

- (i)** In an ideal world, all political leaders know what is good for the people and are motivated only by a desire to serve them.
- (ii)** Our constitution makers opted for free competition in elections as the way to select our future leaders, because this system works better in the long run.
- (iii)** Political leaders are motivated by a desire to advance in their political careers. They want to remain in power or get power and position for themselves for which, they can compete with other political parties.

**Demerits:**

- (i)** An electoral competition creates a sense of disunity and factionalism in every locality.
- (ii)** Different political parties and leaders often level allegations against one another.
- (iii)** Parties and candidates often use dirty tricks to win elections.

### **Q.3. How are elections held in India?**

**Ans. (i)** Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections are held regularly, after every five years.

**(ii)** After five years, the term of all the elected representatives comes to an end.

**(iii)** The Lok Sabha or Vidhan Sabha stands dissolved.

**(iv)** Elections are held in all constituencies at the same time either on the same day or within a few days. This is called a 'general election'.

**(v)** Sometimes, elections are held only for one constituency to fill the vacancy caused by the death or resignation of a member. This is called a 'by-election'.

### **Q.4. How was the system of 'reserved constituencies' introduced for the SCs and STs?**

**Ans. (i)** Some constituencies are reserved for the people who belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

**(ii)** In an SC-reserved constituency, only someone who belongs to the scheduled caste can stand for elections.

**(iii)** Similarly, only those belonging to a scheduled tribe can contest elections from a constituency reserved for STs.

**(iv)** Currently, 79 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes and 41 for the Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha.

**(v)** This number is in proportion to their share in the total population; thus the reserved seats for SCs and STs do not take away the legitimate share of any other social group.

### **Q.5. How does a party file a nomination for its candidate?**

**Ans. (i)** In order to be a candidate, the minimum age is 25 years.

**(ii)** Political parties nominate their candidates who get the party symbol and support.

**(iii)** Party's nomination is often called a party 'ticket'.

**(iv)** Every person who wishes to contest an election has to fill a 'nomination form' and give some money as 'security deposit'.

If the information provided is not correct, the nomination can be cancelled and the security deposit is returned.

### **Q.6. How is campaigning done for elections held in India?**

**Ans. (i)** In India, election campaigns take place for a two-week period between the announcement of the final list of candidates and the date of polling.

**(ii)** During this period, the candidates contact their voters.

**(iii)** Political leaders address election meetings and political parties mobilise their supporters.

**(iv)** This is also the period when newspapers and the television news broadcasting channels are full of election-related stories and debates.

**(v)** During election campaigns, political parties try to focus the public attention on some big issues.

**(vi)** They want the public to vote for their party on that basis.

### **Q.7. Write some of the successful slogans given by different political parties in various elections.**

**Ans. (i)** 'Garibi Hatao' was the slogan of the Congress party, led by Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha elections of 1971. The party promised to prepare all policies to remove poverty from the country.

**(ii)** 'Save Democracy' was the slogan of the Janata Party in the Lok Sabha elections of 1977. The party promised to undo the excesses committed during the Emergency and restore civil liberties.

**(iii)** 'Land to the Tiller' was the slogan used by the Left Front in the West Bengal Assembly elections held in 1977.

**(iv)** 'Protect the Self-respect of the Telugus' was the slogan used by N.T. Rama Rao, the leader of the Telugu Desam Party in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections in 1983.

### **Q.8. What election laws are made for campaigning?**

**Ans.** Every political party and candidate gets a fair and equal chance to compete. According to our election law, no party or candidate can:

- bribe or threaten the voters to vote for them only;
- appeal to the voters in the name of caste or religion;
- use the government resources for election campaigns;
- spend more than `70 lakhs in a constituency for the Lok Sabha elections or `28 lakhs in a constituency during an assembly election.

If they do so, their election can be rejected by the court even after they have been declared elected.

**Q.9. How are 'polls' conducted in India?**

**Ans.**

- The final stage of an election is the day when the voters cast their votes in a polling booth. That day is usually called the Election Day.
- Every person whose name is on the voters' list can go to a nearby 'polling booth', situated usually in a local school or a government office.
- Once the voter goes inside the booth, the election officials identify him or her by putting a mark on his or her finger and allow him or her to cast the vote.
- An agent of each candidate is allowed to sit inside the polling booth and ensure that the voting takes place in a fair way.
- A ballot paper is placed in which the names of the contesting candidates along with their party name and symbols are listed.
- Nowadays, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are used to record votes.
- The machine shows the names of the candidates and party symbols. Independent candidates too have their own symbols, allotted by the election officials.
- Each voter has to press the button against the name of the candidate she or he wants to vote for.

**Q.10. How are votes counted after the polls?**

**Ans.**

- Once the polling is over, all the EVMs are sealed and taken to a secure place.
- A few days later, on a fixed date, all the EVMs from a constituency are opened and the votes secured by each candidate are counted.
- The agents of all candidates are present there to ensure that the counting is done properly.
- The candidate who secures the highest number of votes from a constituency is declared elected.
- In a general election, the counting of votes in all the constituencies usually takes place at the same time, and on the same day.
- Within a few hours of counting, all the results are declared and it becomes clear as to who will form the next government.

**Q.11. What does 'voter turnout' during an election in India signify?**

**Ans. (i)** People's participation in elections is usually measured by the voter turnout figures. Turnout indicates the per cent of eligible voters who actually cast their votes.

**(ii)** In India, the poor, illiterate and the underprivileged people vote in larger proportion as compared to the rich and privileged sections.

**(iii)** Common people in India attach a lot of importance to elections. They feel that through elections, they can bring pressure on the political parties to adopt policies and programmes favourable for them.

**(iv)** The interest of voters, in election-related activities, has been increasing over the years.

**Q.12. What are the challenges to free and fair elections in India?**

**Ans.** Challenges to free and fair elections in India are as follows:

**(i)** Candidates and parties with a lot of money may not be sure of their victory but they do enjoy a big and unfair advantage over smaller parties and independents.

**(ii)** In some parts of the country, candidates with criminal connection have been able to secure a 'ticket' from major parties.

**(iii)** Some families tend to dominate the political parties; tickets are distributed to relatives from these families.

**(iv)** Very often, elections offer little choice to ordinary citizens as both the major parties are similar to each other in their policies and practices.

**(v)** Smaller parties and independent candidates suffer a huge disadvantage as compared to the bigger parties.



## HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

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**Q.1. What is model code of conduct in Indian electoral system? Mention its chief elements.**

It is a set of norms, as prescribed by the Election Commission, to be followed by all the political parties in our country for contesting elections or during campaigns. It is called model code of conduct.

**According to this no party or candidate can:**

- (i)** Use any place of worship for election propaganda.
- (ii)** Use government vehicles, aircrafts and officials for elections.
- (iii)** Once elections are announced, ministers shall not lay foundation stones of any projects, take any big policy decisions.
- (iv)** Ruling party cannot make any promises of providing public facilities.

**Q.2. What system of declaration has been introduced on directions from the Supreme Court regarding nomination of candidate in election?**

**OR**

**What legal declaration is required to be submitted by each candidate who wishes to contest an election?**

**Ans.** Following are the legal declarations to be made by every candidate at the time of filing nomination as per directed by the Supreme Court:

- (i)** Every candidate has to make legal declaration giving full details of serious criminal cases pending against the candidate.
- (ii)** Details of assets and liabilities of the candidate and his or her family.
- (iii)** They also need to give their educational qualifications.

This information has to be made public. This provides an opportunity to the voters to make their decision on the basis of information provided by the candidates.

**Q.3. Examine the need for reserved constituencies in India.**

**OR**

**Why were 'reserved constituencies' devised for the weaker sections by the makers of the Indian constitution?**

**Ans.(i)** The constitution makers were worried that in an open electoral competition, certain weaker sections may not stand a chance to get elected to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assembly.

**(ii)** They may not have the required resources, education and contacts to contest and win elections against others.

**(iii)** Those who are influential and resourceful may prevent them from winning elections.

**(iv)** If that happens, our parliament and assemblies would be deprived of the voice of a significant section of our population.

**(v)** That would make our democracy less representative and less democratic.

So, the makers of our constitution thought of a special system of reserved constituencies for the weaker sections.