1. California’s government still is strongly influenced by the Progressive Movement that dominated the state in the early decades of the 20th century. Describe the Progressive Movement, how it developed and three aspects of California government today that reflect that Progressive legacy. Do you think we should keep these Progressive structures in place or is it time to end them?

2. Direct democracy plays a central role in California politics, particularly through the mechanisms of the initiative, referendum and recall. Describe those three agents of direct democracy, including how they qualify for the ballot and what it takes for them to win in elections. Then provide three positive aspects and three negative aspects of their use in California.

3. In 2010, California voters approved Proposition 14, the Top Two Primary Initiative. How did this position change the way that candidates were elected to office? What was the problem that the initiative sought to address?

4. Describe the events that led to the case Hollingsworth v. Perry (2013) being heard by the US Supreme Court. How did the court decide this case and what rationale did they use? How does this case help explain Federal state relations, the role of initiative process in defining rights and the concept of Judicial Review?

5. The Governorship of California has been called “the little executive.” Compare the powers of Governor and President. In what ways does the US President have more constitutionally granted power than the Governor? Is there any area in which the Governor has a power that Presidents do not have?

6. What is gerrymandering? How does it affect the functioning of legislatures? How did Proposition 11, passed in 2008, and Proposition 20, passed in 2010, affect the way that legislative districts are drawn in the state? Do you think that the new method of drawing districts will be successful in preventing gerrymandering? Why or why not?

7. There are about 5000 units of local government in California. Write an essay in which you describe the various types of local government in California, including counties, cities and special districts. In general terms, how are these government entities organized? What do they do and under what laws do they operate?

8. Even though California would have the fifth largest economy in the world were it an independent nation, it is but one of fifty states in the United States. Write an essay in which you describe and evaluate the formal constitutional relationship between California and the US Government. Include what powers are given to each and how conflicts between those powers are resolved.
9. James Madison once praised the US Constitution for protecting minorities from the "tyranny of the majority." Minority rights refer to decisions made in accordance with the principle that majority rule should not unreasonably and unfairly infringe upon the rights of minorities. Proposition 13 (1978) applied this principle to government spending. What did Proposition 13 do and how does it illustrate that the minority can block the will of the majority? Recently California voters decided to amend the Proposition to require a simple majority to pass a budget. Why was this felt to be necessary?

10. Some residents of California’s northern rural counties have proposed leaving the state and joining counties from Southern Oregon to form the State of Jefferson. This is not the first time this has been proposed. What happened to a similar move in the 1940s? According to the US Constitution, what would be necessary for parts of the state to secede from California? Do you think this would be a good idea? Why or why not?