

Chapter 7

Multiple Choice/Fill in the Blank

1. California is divided into:
 - a. twelve very large counties, equal in geographic size and population
 - b. twenty counties, all of which are approximately equal in population
 - c. thirty-two counties whose boundaries were redrawn in 1974 to account for shifting populations
 - d. fifty-eight counties, most of which were created in 1879

2. An unincorporated area is land governed by a:
 - a. county board of supervisors
 - b. town or city council
 - c. special district only
 - d. regional government only

3. The two types of cities in California are _____ and _____.
 - a. charter; general law
 - b. county; townships
 - c. unincorporated; incorporated
 - d. dependent; independent

4. Suppose you live in an unincorporated area of the state. Who would be your local government representative?
 - a. The city council and mayor
 - b. The nearest city manager
 - c. LAFCO
 - d. A county supervisor on the Board of Supervisors

5. What political body governs a county?
 - a. county council appointed by the governor
 - b. board of supervisors
 - c. professional county managers with different area specialties
 - d. a council-manager system

6. What is the largest county (by population) in California?
 - a. San Diego
 - b. Los Angeles
 - c. San Francisco
 - d. San Bernardino

7. The largest source of county revenue is:
 - a. sales taxes
 - b. licenses, fines, and permitting fees
 - c. rents and leases
 - d. the state

8. Other than the state, which provides almost a third of county revenues, the largest single source of county revenues is:
- charges for services
 - federal grants
 - property taxes
 - licenses and permits
9. How do counties usually pay for the public services that they provide?
- the state fully funds all required operations
 - sales taxes and fees charged to users of services
 - income taxes
 - cities
10. Do counties receive federal funds?
- yes
 - no
11. What are the two largest categories of county expenditures?
- public ways and facilities
 - recreation and cultural services
 - public assistance and public protection
 - education and health
15. If about 70 percent of the money K-12 schools receive comes from the state's general fund budget, from where does the rest come?
- almost solely from the federal government, through the Department of Education
 - mostly the federal government, property taxes, and local school bonds
 - exclusive contracts with private companies and vendors
 - mostly private donations to school foundations

Type: F

16. The only California city that is also a county is _____.

- San Francisco

22. "Municipality" refers to a:

- county
- region
- city
- any government below the state level

24. Of 482 incorporated cities in California, about _____ of them operate under general law.

- 10 percent
- 25 percent
- 50 percent

d. 75 percent

25. A city that forms its own constitution and grants local government supreme authority over municipal affairs is considered a:

- a. charter city that operates under the principle of home rule
- b. general law city
- c. special district
- d. constitutional law city

26. Most cities in California, about 70 percent, have a five-person city council that hires a professional _____ to oversee the city's budget and manage municipal operations.

- a. supervisor
- b. mayor
- c. city manager
- d. alderman

27. The average city employee in California earns about _____ annually.

- a. \$15,000
- b. \$30,000
- c. \$60,000
- d. \$120,000

30. All city and county governments must provide advance notice of all meetings, hold meetings open to all visitors, and publicly disclose the proceedings of all meetings – as required by which state law?

- a. the Ralph M. Brown Act
- b. the General Law Act
- c. the Fair Political Practices Act
- d. Proposition 13

31. The largest single source of city revenues is:

- a. fines and forfeitures
- b. bonds
- c. property taxes
- d. charges for services

32. Generally speaking, what is the largest category of city expenditures?

- a. public safety
- b. transportation
- c. public utilities
- d. general government expenses

35. _____ fees are charges passed to homeowners by builders who are responsible for funding new infrastructure such as sewers, street lighting, and school construction.

- a. Mello-Roos
- b. Charter

- c. Redevelopment
- d. Brown Act

38. Which of these is not a special district?

- a. vector control
- b. local agency formation commission
- c. redevelopment agencies
- d. water districts

39. School districts are governed by:

- a. city councils
- b. county boards of supervisors
- c. five-member boards of education
- d. the state Superintendent of Public Instruction

41. Proposition 98 guarantees a minimum funding level for state education; every year, approximately _____ of the state budget is spent on K-14 education.

- a. 5 percent
- b. 10 percent
- c. 25 percent
- d. 40 percent

44. About _____ special districts exist in California, and _____ of them operate independently of counties or cities, with their own elected boards of governors.

- a. 500; half
- b. 1,000; half
- c. 4,700; two-thirds
- d. 5,000; none

45. How are most special districts funded?

- a. by the state
- b. through special assessments (fees levied) on property owners
- c. income taxes
- d. sales taxes levied by counties

47. What is true about regional planning for issues that affect millions of people living in large areas that encompass many cities and several counties?

- a. There's really no way to plan for any large-scale infrastructure projects, so it doesn't happen.
- b. The governor is in charge of coordinating regional planning because he heads the administrative branch, in which the relevant state planning agencies operate.
- c. Councils of Governments (COGs such as SANBAG), bring together local elected officials to plan for transportation, housing, water availability, and other types of large-scale, long-term projects.
- d. All planning for regions, or large areas covering the state, must be dealt with by the legislature.

48. A regional governmental organization that provides a forum for local city and county leaders to plan for future, common needs such as transportation, housing, and water is called a:

- a. special district
- b. council of government (COG)
- c. federal agency
- d. LAFCO

49. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is an example of a:

- a. school district
- b. special district
- c. council of government (COG)
- d. Local Agency Formation Commission

50. AB 32 has gained much attention for being the world's first law establishing:

- a. state-run sustainable salmon fisheries
- b. immigrant rights
- c. regulations on and a cap-and-trade system to curb greenhouse gas emissions
- d. a tax on fatty foods

51. Which piece of legislation makes California the first government to establish a combination of regulations and market mechanisms to curb greenhouse gas emissions?

- a. AB 32
- b. the Brown Act
- c. Proposition 98
- d. the 2010 Budget Act

52. Congress wrote what law (in 1988) that restricts the scope of tribal gaming and defers regulatory authority over tribal gaming to the states?

- a. the Brown Act
- b. the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA)
- c. the Indian Civil Rights Act
- d. Proposition 5

55. How many federally-recognized Native American tribes are there in California?

- a. 10
- b. 50
- c. 110
- d. 1000

57. Native American tribes are considered sovereign entities; in California, most govern themselves through:

- a. smaller versions of state governments, with elected legislatures, governors, and courts
- b. councils that retain executive, legislative, and judicial powers
- c. compacts negotiated with the state government

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d. written constitutions that are archived with California's secretary of state

59. Another word for a law passed by a city council is

- a. initiative
- b. administrative mandate
- c. proviso
- d. ordinance

60. A city that does not provide its own services but instead enters into an agreement with a neighboring city, private firms, or county to provide essential services is known as

- a. an independent municipality
- b. a contract city
- c. an unincorporated city
- d. a furlough town

62. To help plan and set policy with respect to many aspects of city life, from recreation to identifying transportation needs, council members often rely on appointed _____ to assist them with making policy recommendations.

- a. local agency formation commissions
- b. receivers
- c. boards and commissions
- d. business leaders

63. The (Ralph M.) Brown Act ensures that public meetings will be

- a. either held open or kept closed at the discretion of the city council
- b. open to the public, but there is no requirement that the time and place be advertised
- c. open to anyone, with advance notice of the meetings, and disclosure of the proceedings
- d. cancelled if at least ten members of the public do not show up

67. If a group of people living in an unincorporated area want to form a city, to which government entity must they appeal?

- a. the state legislature
- b. the secretary of state
- c. a local agency formation commission (LAFCO)
- d. the county board of supervisors

Type: F

72. Cities often borrow money by issuing _____ that must first be approved by local voters.

- a. bonds

73. How do local governments typically finance large construction projects, such as retrofitting hospitals to be safe in earthquakes, fixing aging community facilities, or expanding schools?

- a. by getting jumbo loans from a bank
- b. by selling bonds that must be paid back with interest

- c. by raising taxes to pay for each project
- d. by contracting with developers and then charging fees to users of the facilities

76. Which of these categories of expenditures is among the most expensive for both counties and cities?

- a. parks and recreation
- b. education
- c. road maintenance and transportation
- d. public protection

Type: F

77. An example of a special district is: _____

- a. Varies. Possibilities mentioned in the book include: water, hospital, rat and mosquito (vector) control, cemetery, street lighting, trash disposal, fire protection, irrigation, bus and rail transit, utility. School districts are also mentioned as a type of special district. Note: regional governments such as COGs are not special districts. JPA's may be considered special districts, but regional governments that merely plan are not considered special districts.

81. The idea that the states and the federal government share authority for governing citizens is:

- a. separation of powers
- b. joint powers authority
- c. federalism
- d. collaborative government

Essay or Short Answer Questions

Type: E

17. What are counties, and for what purposes do they exist?

- a. Counties are subdivisions of the state that exist to fulfill state government programs and mandates. They are expected to provide the same kinds of services regardless of population size or geographic area. Services include public safety, public assistance, elections and voting, tax collection, environment and recreation, public health, education, social services, transit, and vital records.

Type: E

18. Name at least three types of county elected officials.

- a. Varies. Although the names may vary from county to county, the general categories are: county supervisor, sheriff, district attorney, auditor/controller, treasurer/tax collector, clerk/recorder.

Type: E

19. List the categories of basic social and political services that counties provide.

- a. Public safety, public assistance, elections and voting, tax collection, environment and recreation, public health, education, social services, transit, and vital records.

Type: E

20. List at least five types of services that the state requires counties to provide.

a. Varies. (A list might include any of these:) courts, jails, probation, public defense, juvenile detention, sheriff, fire, emergency services, housing, homeless assistance, food stamps, state welfare programs, voting processes, voter registration, tax collection, parks, recreation facilities, management of open space, waste removal, recycling, regulation of air quality, water, hospitals, mental health clinics, drug rehabilitation programs, libraries, schools, adoptions, children's foster care, airports, bus and rail systems; bridges, road maintenance, birth/death/marriage certificates.

Type: E

21. How do counties finance their operations?

a. Counties finance their operations through sales taxes, user fees, state government funds, property taxes, and federal grants.

Type: E

33. What sources of revenue have replaced the property taxes that cities used to depend on to finance their operations?

a. (In 2010-11, only 8 percent of the average city budget came from property taxes; the percentage was closer to 12 percent in 2013.) Today cities depend on sales taxes; builder/developer fees; service charges for public utilities, services, and transit; a variety of taxes on hotels, businesses, and property; and state and federal funds transfers/grants. Typically, bonds provide almost the same amount of funding that cities derive from property taxes. Students might also note that in tough economic years when the state "raids" the property tax funds, cities must raise fees, or force others (builders and developers, for example) to bear the costs of providing new infrastructure, such as roads and schools – and these are typically passed on to new homeowners in the form of "Mello-Roos" fees.

Type: E

34. Explain what the "fiscalization of land use" means with respect to city government.

a. Making land-use decisions based on a project's net fiscal impact is known as the fiscalization of land use. The concept is that decision makers in a city will determine which projects should be built depending on how much revenue they will generate for a city. In practical terms, cities have incentives to entice and keep retail businesses that can generate sales taxes, because they keep one percent of state sales taxes generated in their jurisdictions. Auto dealerships, shopping malls, and big-box retailers like Wal-Mart are favored over low-income housing and service-based industries that could further stress city resources. In other words, decisions are made without regard to the intrinsic value of or need for a project.

Type: E

36. What are Mello-Roos fees?

a. Cities can charge homebuilders and developers heavy fees for the construction-related costs of new infrastructure such as new streets, school construction, sewers, street lighting, and so forth. Developers can pass these fees to homebuyers in the form of

Mello-Roos fees which can amount to thousands of dollars per home annually, and take the form of a lien placed against each property that will be in effect until paid off (sometimes as long as 40 years). Fees can vary dramatically from area to area, and even house to house.

Type: E

37. What is a special district?

a. A geographic area or domain governed by an autonomous board for a single purpose. These districts deliver a service that a city or county cannot or will not provide. Examples would include mosquito abatement districts, the Metropolitan Water district, air quality management districts, or even school districts.

Type: E

42. What is a charter school?

a. A charter school is founded/organized by parents, teachers, and/or community groups to provide specialized programs of instruction, such as those with an emphasis on performing arts, sciences, or college preparation. Charter schools are funded by the state but operate outside the jurisdiction of a local school board, and because they are a type of public school they are free and open to all students.

Type: E

46. Explain the purposes and functions of a regional government.

a. Regional governments plan, regulate, and coordinate land-use and development-related activities across counties and cities by providing a permanent forum in which local leaders (usually elected leaders) can discuss ideas and exchange information. State law grants regional government housing and transportation planning authority, but most do other kinds of planning for future populations across a wide spectrum of common infrastructure-related needs, including food and water availability, public safety, and environmental quality. Most regional governments take the form of Councils of Government, or COGs. COGs coordinate policy; they cannot dictate or force decisions on local governments. They receive input from research specialists and advisers to help them plan for the future. They propose legislation and review federal grants programs, but do not provide public services. Another form of regional government is a regulatory agency that sets rules for environmentally sensitive activities, such as an air quality management district (AQMDs).

Type: E

53. How does the U.S. Congress entice the state government to follow its rules, even with regard to issues over which the states have sole jurisdiction?

a. Congress grants money for projects but requires that the states follow its rules with respect to spending that money; it withholds federal funds unless the state follows federal rules. The state is subject to unfunded mandates, or federal laws requiring the state to provide services, even though no federal funds are provided to help fund those services. Congress can also establish preemptive legislation, federal laws that prohibit the states from passing certain state laws.

Type: E

56. How does the state of California collect money from tribal governments that run gaming enterprises?

a. Although the state cannot collect taxes from tribal governments, governors have negotiated compacts with tribes to allow certain forms of gaming, including slot machines, in exchange for payments. One type of payment takes the form of revenue-sharing with nongaming tribes; another takes the form of contributions to a fund for reimbursing casino-related costs to cities and counties (costs related to traffic congestion, public safety, and gambling addiction, for example). A third type is a flat payment to the state, which Gov. Schwarzenegger negotiated in exchange for allowing more slot machines in tribal-run casinos.

Type: E

58. What kinds of governments below the state level provide essential services to residents of California? Describe the kinds of services they provide.

a. Students should name counties, cities, and special districts as providers of essential services. In their answers, students should demonstrate familiarity with a wide range of services. With respect to counties, these include (and are not limited to): assuring public safety and providing access to justice (courts, jails, probation, public defense, juvenile detention, sheriff, fire, emergency services); providing public assistance (housing, homeless assistance, food stamps, state welfare programs); managing elections and voting (voting processes, voter registration); tax collection; maintaining the environment and providing recreation (parks, recreation facilities, open space, waste removal, recycling, air quality, water); improving public health (hospitals, mental health clinics, drug rehabilitation programs); providing education (libraries, schools); providing social services (adoptions, children's foster care); providing mass transit (airports, bus and rail systems; bridges, road maintenance); and maintaining vital records (birth/death/marriage certificates). Cities also provide essential public services in the areas of public safety and emergency services; sewage and sanitation; public health; public works, including street maintenance; parks and recreation; libraries and schools; and land-use planning. If cities lack their own facilities or resources, they can contract with counties for services, pool their resources in a joint-powers agreement, or contract with private firms. Special districts are geographic areas governed by an elected board for a specific purpose, to meet critical needs that cities and counties lack the will or capacity to address. Typical special districts are single-purpose: they are created for one reason only. These include school districts (for education); vector control (eradicating pests and vermin); water districts (such as the Metropolitan Water District); port authorities; street lighting; and so forth.

Type: E

61. Why are an increasing number of cities laying off public employees and turning to other entities (private firms, other cities or counties) to provide essential services?

a. Public employees historically have been guaranteed a pension upon retirement, and the future and current cost projections of those promised payments are high. Faced with a shortage of revenue to pay short-term salaries and also fulfill long-term pension obligations, city officials in some cities seek to pay other entities for services, rather than

pay city employees to provide them.

Type: E

64. What is a “strong mayor” form of government?

a. The mayor’s authority exceeds that of the city council members; for example, he or she might have veto power over the council’s decisions or actions, be able to hire and fire individuals for certain positions (such as the city manager) at will, and offer an agenda to the public that will be the basis for judging whether the mayor has been an effective representative (she or he will offer a clear agenda and be held accountable for it).

Type: E

66. What is the difference between a charter city and a general law city?

a. A charter city devises its own set of rules and regulations, and does not have to follow state law regarding the structure and function of municipal government. That “home rule” model contrasts with a general law city, which organizes under state law. (For example, state law sets limits on how much elected officials can be paid; officials in charter cities can set their own salaries.)

Type: E

71. What are the costs and benefits of tribal gaming enterprises?

a. Costs include environmental and social stresses, such as increased traffic congestion near casinos, higher public safety costs, and higher incidences of gambling addiction. (By implication, these have prompted the need for new infrastructure such as roads, waste disposal, and programs to aid people with addictions, for example). Gaming has not lifted most tribal members out of poverty, however. On the benefits side, many tribal governments have found new sources of revenue and economic independence that have allowed them to provide new services to their members; the state has benefited from the creation of new jobs and revenue sources.

Type: E

74. Why have several cities in California declared bankruptcy or are on the verge of doing so?

a. Varies. Cities go bankrupt when they cannot generate enough revenue to pay their bills. One reason is simple mismanagement of funds, which includes spending funds intended for other purposes (such as “raiding” pension accounts), or miscalculation, such as assuming higher (and sometimes unrealistic) rates of returns on investments and greater tax receipts that did not materialize as the national economy declined. A major reason is the inability to pay what has been promised to current and future retirees. In some cities, employee contracts containing relatively generous pensions and future health care benefits were negotiated, but moneys to fund those obligations were not secured and those obligations are not being fulfilled (another form of financial mismanagement). These so-called “unfunded liabilities” represent many billions of dollars owed to public employees who will be retiring in the coming years.

Type: E

75. What does the term “nonpartisan election” mean, and which elected positions in

California are nonpartisan?

a. Nonpartisan elections are those in which a person's party affiliation will not be listed on the ballot next to a person's name (the voter lacks the political party cue when voting). All local elections are nonpartisan; this includes city councils and mayors, county boards of supervisors, school boards, special district boards, and superior court judges. [Note: regional governments are not elected.]

Type: E

82. What is California's "cap-and-trade" system, and what is its purpose?

a. California's Air Resources Board was authorized by AB32 to implement programs that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions in California. They implemented a cap-and-trade system for regulating GHG emissions that became operational in 2012. In this market-based approach, the state sets an upper limit, or cap, on the aggregate amount of statewide GHG emissions. Polluters were initially given trading credits for the amount of GHG's they normally produce. Every year the total cap on statewide emissions declines by 2 to 3 percent, providing incentives for polluters to invest in more efficient technologies or to reduce their own emissions, thereby creating for themselves a surplus of carbon trading credits that they can sell at a quarterly online auction.

True or False Questions

12. Counties rely heavily on property taxes to fund their operations.

- a. True
- b. False

13. On average, about one-third of county expenses are devoted to public protection-related services.

- a. True
- b. False

14. Counties are subdivisions of the state that exist to fulfill state government programs and mandates.

- a. True
- b. False

23. Cities provide essential public services that may overlap or supplement the services that counties provide.

- a. True
- b. False

28. Unlike the state legislature, city councils have legislative and executive powers, with the authority to create, pass, and implement local laws.

- a. True
- b. False

29. Elected officials on only some city councils and county boards of supervisors face term limits, because there is no state law regarding term limits for local officials.

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- a. True
- b. False

40. School board members are elected in highly partisan elections, and tend to be hotly contested between Democrats and Republicans.

- a. True
- b. False

43. The state lottery provides a tiny fraction (about 1.5%) of public schools' funding.

- a. True
- b. False

54. No state can collect taxes from tribal nations.

- a. True
- b. False

65. If a city has a strong mayor form of government, then there is no need to hire a city manager.

- a. True
- b. False

68. More than half of the state's slot machines are in tribal-run casinos located in three Southern California counties (San Diego, San Bernardino, and Riverside).

- a. True
- b. False

69. Tribal gaming has almost eliminated poverty among Native Americans in California.

- a. True
- b. False

70. Nationwide and in California, donations by tribes to political campaigns have favored Democrats.

- a. True
- b. False

78. Charter schools are private schools that operate on public property.

- a. True
- b. False

79. Charter schools are public schools that operate independently of a school district, and are free to all students.

- a. True
- b. False

80. State lottery funds contribute a large portion of most school districts' annual budget.

- a. True

b. False

83. Gaming compacts that are negotiated between Native American tribes and the governor are typically subject to statewide voter referenda, and they sometimes are rejected by voters.

a. True

b. False

84. Legally, Native American tribes must pay in full for the costs on local governments that their gaming enterprises may impose, such as wear and tear on roads, added police protection and traffic controls, air pollution, or waste disposal.

a. True

b. False