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Federalism — CBSE Class 10 Social Science Chapter Test

FREE CHAPTER TEST · CLASS X · SOCIAL SCIENCE (087) · PATTERN OF THE CBSE SAMPLE QUESTION PAPER 2026-27

TIME ALLOWED	MAXIMUM MARKS	QUESTIONS	NAME / ROLL NO.
1½ hours	40	20 (A 10 · B 4 · C 3 · D 1 · E 2)	

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following instructions very carefully and strictly follow them:

1. This question paper contains 20 questions. All questions are compulsory.
2. This question paper is divided into five sections: A, B, C, D and E.
3. In Section A, Questions 1 to 8 are multiple choice questions (MCQs) and Questions 9 and 10 are assertion-reason based questions of 1 mark each.
4. In Section B, Q11–14 are very short answer (VSA) type questions, carrying 2 marks each.
5. In Section C, Q15–17 are short answer (SA) type questions, carrying 3 marks each.
6. In Section D, Q18 is a long answer (LA) type question, carrying 5 marks.
7. In Section E, Q19–20 are case study based questions, carrying 4 marks each, with sub-parts of the values of 1, 1 and 2 marks.
8. There is no overall choice. However, an internal choice has been provided in 1 question of Section B, 1 question of Section C, 1 question of Section D and in the 2-mark sub-part of each question of Section E.
9. Answer very short answer questions in about 40 words, short answer questions in about 60 words, long answer questions in about 120 words and case-based questions in about 100 words.
10. This chapter test follows the section structure, question types and marks per question of the CBSE Class X Social Science (087) Sample Question Paper 2026-27, at about half the length of the 80-mark board paper: 40 marks in 1½ hours.
11. The answer key and the marking scheme are at the end of this booklet. Attempt the paper in 1½ hours before you look at them.

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Chapter: Federalism (Political Science: Democratic Politics – II) · **Topics:** What is federalism · Key features of federalism · Coming together and holding together · Division of powers in India · Linguistic States and language policy · Centre–State relations · Decentralisation and local government

SECTION A

This section comprises 10 questions of 1 mark each: 8 multiple choice questions (MCQs) and 2 assertion-reason based questions.

1. Which of the following subjects is included in the Union List? 1

(A) Police
(B) Agriculture
(C) Banking
(D) Irrigation

2. Subjects such as computer software, which came up after the Constitution was made, are called 1

(A) residuary subjects, on which the Union Government can legislate
(B) concurrent subjects
(C) state subjects
(D) local subjects

3. Which of the following is an example of a 'coming together' federation? 1

(A) India
(B) Spain
(C) Belgium
(D) United States of America

4. Which subject is on the Concurrent List? 1

(A) Defence
(B) Education
(C) Police
(D) Currency

5. In case of a dispute between the Union and a State government about the division of powers, the final decision is made by 1

(A) the President
(B) the Prime Minister
(C) the Parliament
(D) the High Courts and the Supreme Court

6. At the village level, the decision-making body that includes all the voters of the village and approves the budget of the gram panchayat is the 1

(A) gram sabha
(B) panchayat samiti
(C) zilla parishad
(D) municipality

7. How many languages are included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution as 'Scheduled Languages'? 1

(A) 18
(B) 20
(C) 22
(D) 24

8. Which of the following statements about the constitutional amendment of 1992 on local government is NOT correct? 1

(A) It is constitutionally mandatory to hold regular elections to local government bodies
(B) Local bodies get all the powers of the State government
(C) At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women
(D) An independent State Election Commission conducts panchayat and municipal elections

9. **Assertion (A):** India is described as a 'holding together' federation. 1
Reason (R): In a holding together federation, a large country decides to divide its power between the constituent states and the national government.

(A) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

(B) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

(C) Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.

(D) Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

10. **Assertion (A):** In a federation, the fundamental provisions of the Constitution can be changed by one level of government alone. 1
Reason (R): In a federation, each level of government has its own jurisdiction, specified in the Constitution.

(A) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

(B) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of Assertion (A).

(C) Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.

(D) Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

SECTION B

This section comprises 4 very short answer (VSA) type questions of 2 marks each.

11. (a) Distinguish between a federal and a unitary form of government. 2

OR

(b) Distinguish between 'coming together' and 'holding together' federations, with one example of each.

12. What are 'Union Territories'? Give two examples. 2

13. Explain the dual objectives of a federal system. 2

14. How has India's language policy strengthened its federation? 2

SECTION C

This section comprises 3 short answer (SA) type questions of 3 marks each.

15. (a) Describe the three-fold distribution of legislative powers between the Union and the State governments. 3

OR

(b) Describe the main features of the constitutional amendment of 1992 that made the third tier of democracy more powerful.

16. Explain the key features of federalism. Give any three. 3

17. How did the creation of linguistic States strengthen federalism in India? 3

SECTION D

This section comprises 1 long answer (LA) type questions of 5 marks each.

18. (a) Describe the structure of local government in rural and urban India, and give two problems that still remain. 5

OR

(b) How have Centre–State relations in India changed since 1990? Explain with five points.

SECTION E

This section comprises 2 case study based questions of 4 marks each, with sub-parts of 1, 1 and 2 marks.

19. Federalism is a system of government in which the power is divided between a central authority and various constituent units of the country. Usually, a federation has two levels of government: one for the entire country, responsible for a few subjects of common national interest, and others at the level of provinces or states, which look after much of the day-to-day administering of their state.

(i) Name the two levels of government in a federation. [1]

(ii) Give one subject of common national interest for which the government of the entire country is responsible in India. [1]

(iii) Why are the sources of revenue for each level of government specified in a federation? Give one other key feature of federalism. [2]

OR

(iii) Why can't the Union Government by itself change the power-sharing arrangement in India? Explain. [2]

20. Before 1992, local governments existed in India but were directly under the control of State governments. Elections to these bodies were not held regularly, and they did not have any powers or resources of their own. A major step towards decentralisation was taken in 1992.

(i) What is decentralisation? [1]

(ii) What is the basic idea behind decentralisation? [1]

(iii) Give two reasons why local government is important in a democracy. [2]

OR

(iii) How has the reservation of at least one-third of the positions in local bodies for women strengthened democracy? Give two points. [2]

END OF THE QUESTION PAPER

ANSWER KEY — SECTION A

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
(C)	(A)	(D)	(B)	(D)	(A)	(C)	(B)	(A)	(D)

MARKING SCHEME AND WORKED SOLUTIONS

Marks for each step are shown in brackets, as in the CBSE marking scheme. Any correct alternative method earns full marks.

Q1. Answer (C). Banking, defence, foreign affairs and currency are on the Union List; police, agriculture and irrigation are State subjects.

Q2. Answer (A). Subjects not in any of the three lists are residuary; the Union Government has the power to legislate on them.

Q3. Answer (D). The USA, Switzerland and Australia were formed by independent states coming together; India, Spain and Belgium are 'holding together' federations.

Q4. Answer (B). Education, forest, trade unions, marriage, adoption and succession are concurrent subjects; both Union and State governments can make laws on them.

Q5. Answer (D). Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution and the powers of the different levels of government; they act as umpire.

Q6. Answer (A). The gram panchayat works under the overall supervision of the gram sabha, which meets at least twice or thrice a year.

Q7. Answer (C). Besides Hindi, there are 21 other languages recognised as Scheduled Languages: 22 in all.

Q8. Answer (B). State governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local bodies — not all their powers.

Q9. Answer (A). Both true, and R explains A: India's Constitution divided power between the Union and the States. Answer (A).

Q10. Answer (D). A is false: fundamental provisions cannot be unilaterally changed by one level; such changes require the consent of both levels. R is true. Answer (D).

Q11. (2 marks) Answer: (a) unitary: sub-units subordinate; federal: own powers, both answerable to the people; (b) coming together vs holding together with examples.
(a) In a unitary system there is only one level of government, or the sub-units are subordinate to the central government, which can pass on orders to them. [1]
In a federal system the central government cannot order the state government to do something; the state government has powers of its own for which it is not answerable to the central government, and both are answerable to the people. [1]
OR (b) 'Coming together': independent states come together on their own to form a bigger unit, pool sovereignty and retain identity; all constituent states usually have equal power (USA, Switzerland, Australia). [1]
'Holding together': a large country divides its power between the constituent states and the national government; the central government tends to be more powerful, and states may have unequal powers (India, Spain, Belgium). [1]

Q12. (2 marks) Answer: Small areas run with special powers of the Centre; Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, Delhi.
Some units of the Indian Union enjoy very little power; these are areas too small to become an independent state and which could not be merged with any existing state. [1]
They do not have the powers of a state; the Central Government has special powers in running them. Examples: Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, Delhi (any two). [1]

Q13. (2 marks) Answer: Unity of the country and accommodation of regional diversity.
To safeguard and promote the unity of the country. [1]
At the same time to accommodate regional diversity; for this, governments at different levels should agree to some rules of power-sharing and trust that each would abide by its part of the agreement. [1]

Q14. (2 marks) Answer: No national language imposed; 22 scheduled languages, state languages, English continued.
Hindi was identified as the official language, but it is the mother tongue of only about 40 per cent of Indians; besides Hindi there are 21 other Scheduled Languages, and candidates can write the central government examinations in any of these. [1]
States have their own official languages; the use of English for official purposes continued along with Hindi after 1965, as non-Hindi-speaking states demanded — this flexibility avoided the conflicts seen in Sri Lanka. [1]

Q15. (3 marks) Answer: (a) Union, State and Concurrent lists with examples; Union law prevails; (b) regular elections and reservations; one-third for women; State Election Commission and shared powers.
(a) Union List: subjects of national importance such as defence, foreign affairs, banking, communications and currency, on which the Union Government alone can make laws, since a uniform policy is needed. [1]
State List: subjects of State and local importance such as police, trade, commerce, agriculture and irrigation, on which State governments alone can make laws. [1]
Concurrent List: subjects of common interest such as education, forest, trade unions, marriage, adoption and succession; both can make laws, and if they conflict the law made by the Union Government prevails. [1]
OR (b) Regular elections to local government bodies are constitutionally mandatory; seats are reserved in elected bodies and executive heads for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. [1]
At least one-third of all positions are reserved for women. [1]
An independent institution, the State Election Commission, conducts panchayat and municipal elections; and State governments are required to share some powers and revenue with local government bodies. [1]

Q16. (3 marks) Answer: Two or more levels; constitutionally guaranteed jurisdictions that need both levels' consent to change; courts as umpire, specified revenue.
There are two or more levels (tiers) of government, which govern the same citizens, each tier having its own jurisdiction in specific matters of legislation, taxation and administration. [1]
The jurisdictions are specified in the Constitution, and the fundamental provisions cannot be unilaterally changed by one level of government; changes require the consent of both. [1]
Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution and the powers of the different levels of government; sources of revenue for each level are clearly specified to ensure its financial autonomy. [1]

Q17. (3 marks) Answer: People of one language in one State; feared break-up but made India more united; easier administration.
In 1947 the boundaries of several old States were changed to create new States so that people who spoke the same language lived in the same State; some States were created on the basis of culture, ethnicity or geography (such as Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand). [1]
Many leaders had feared it would lead to the disintegration of the country, but experience has shown that the formation of linguistic States has actually made the country more united. [1]
It has also made administration easier, since people are governed in their own language. [1]

Q18. (5 marks) Answer: (a) gram panchayat and gram sabha; panchayat samiti; zilla parishad; municipalities and corporations; irregular gram sabhas, few powers and resources; (b) coalitions after 1990; respect for State autonomy; earlier dominance; misuse of power; Supreme Court judgement.

(a) Each village, or a group of villages, has a gram panchayat — a council of several ward members (panch) and a president (sarpanch), elected directly by all the adult population; it works under the supervision of the gram sabha. [1]

A few gram panchayats are grouped to form a panchayat samiti (block or mandal), whose members are elected by all the panchayat members in that area. [1]

All the panchayat samitis in a district together constitute the zilla (district) parishad; its chairperson is the political head. [1]

In urban areas there are municipalities, and big cities have municipal corporations, headed by a municipal chairperson and a mayor respectively. [1]

Problems: gram sabhas are not held regularly; most State governments have not transferred significant powers to local governments, nor given adequate resources. [1]

OR (b) When no single party got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha after 1990, the major national parties had to enter into an alliance with many parties, including several regional parties, to form a government at the Centre. [1]

This led to a new culture of power-sharing and respect for the autonomy of State governments. [1]

For a long time the same party ruled at the Centre and in most States, so the State governments did not exercise their rights as autonomous federal units. [1]

When different parties ruled at the Centre and in a State, the Central government often misused the Constitution to dismiss State governments controlled by rival parties. [1]

A major judgement of the Supreme Court made it difficult for the Central government to dismiss State governments in an arbitrary manner; federal power-sharing is more effective today. [1]

Q19. (4 marks) Answer: (i) Union and State governments; (ii) defence, foreign affairs or currency; (iii)(a) financial autonomy; own jurisdictions; (b) two-thirds of both Houses, ratified by half the States.

(i) A government for the entire country, and governments at the level of provinces or states. [1]

(ii) Defence (or foreign affairs, banking, communications, currency). [1]

(iii)(a) To ensure the financial autonomy of each level, so that each can carry out its responsibilities. [1]

Another feature: each level has its own jurisdiction, specified in the Constitution (or: fundamental provisions cannot be changed by one level alone). [1]

OR (iii)(b) Any change to it has to be passed by both Houses of Parliament with at least a two-thirds majority. [1]

Then it has to be ratified by the legislatures of at least half of the total States. [1]

Q20. (4 marks) Answer: (i) power transferred to local government; (ii) local problems best solved locally; (iii)(a) direct participation, democratic habits; (b) many women elected, more representative bodies.

(i) When power is taken away from Central and State governments and given to local government. [1]

(ii) There are many problems and issues best settled at the local level; people have better knowledge of problems in their localities and better ideas on where to spend money. [1]

(iii)(a) At the local level it is possible for the people to directly participate in decision-making. [1]

It helps to inculcate a habit of democratic participation, and local government is the best way to realise the principle of local self-government. [1]

OR (iii)(b) It has brought a very large number of women into elected bodies, giving them a voice in decisions that affect their lives. [1]

It has made local government more representative, giving a share in power to a section of society that was long kept out of public life. [1]

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