AP

INCLUDES
- Course framework
- Instructional section
- Sample exam questions

AP® U.S. Government and Politics

COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTION

Effective
Fall 2026

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

Endorsed by the
National Constitution Center

AP® U.S. Government and Politics

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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

The course framework within this course and exam description is a model of political and ideological balance. It will not only help students understand the U.S. Constitution and the political system but will also help them become informed citizens who are willing to preserve, protect, and defend the rights and liberties at the core of our nation's charter. That is why we are delighted to partner with College Board on a series of classroom lessons and materials that support instruction in AP U.S. Government and Politics and help bring balanced constitutional content to students across America.

AP COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTIONS ARE UPDATED PERIODICALLY
Please visit AP Central (apcentral.collegeboard.org) to determine whether a more recent course and exam description is available.

What AP® Stands For

Thousands of Advanced Placement teachers have contributed to the principles articulated here. These principles are not new; they are, rather, a reminder of how AP already works in classrooms nationwide. The following principles are designed to ensure that teachers' expertise is respected, required course content is understood, and that students are academically challenged and free to make up their own minds.

1. AP stands for clarity and transparency. Teachers and students deserve clear expectations. The Advanced Placement Program makes public its course frameworks and sample assessments. Confusion about what is permitted in the classroom disrupts teachers and students as they navigate demanding work.
2. AP is an unflinching encounter with evidence. AP courses enable students to develop as independent thinkers and to draw their own conclusions. Evidence and the scientific method are the starting place for conversations in AP courses.
3. AP opposes censorship. AP is animated by a deep respect for the intellectual freedom of teachers and students alike. If a school bans required topics from their AP courses, the AP Program removes the AP designation from that course and its inclusion in the AP Course Ledger provided to colleges and universities. For example, the concepts of evolution are at the heart of college biology, and a course that neglects such concepts does not pass muster as AP Biology.
4. AP opposes indoctrination. AP students are expected to analyze different perspectives from their own, and no points on an AP Exam are awarded for agreement with any specific viewpoint. AP students are not required to feel certain ways about themselves or the course content. AP courses instead develop students' abilities to assess the credibility of sources, draw conclusions, and make up their own minds.

   As the AP English Literature course description states: "AP students are not expected or asked to subscribe to any one specific set of cultural or political values, but are expected to have the maturity to analyze perspectives different from their own and to question the meaning, purpose, or effect of such content within the literary work as a whole."
5. AP courses foster an open-minded approach to the histories and cultures of different peoples. The study of different nationalities, cultures, religions, races, and ethnicities is essential within a variety of academic disciplines. AP courses ground such studies in primary sources so that students can evaluate experiences and evidence for themselves.
6. Every AP student who engages with evidence is listened to and respected. Students are encouraged to evaluate arguments but not one another. AP classrooms respect diversity in backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. The perspectives and contributions of the full range of AP students are sought and considered. Respectful debate of ideas is cultivated and protected; personal attacks have no place in AP.
7. AP is a choice for parents and students. Parents and students freely choose to enroll in AP courses. Course descriptions are available online for parents and students to inform their choice. Parents do not define which college-level topics are suitable within AP courses; AP course and exam materials are crafted by committees of professors and other expert educators in each field. AP courses and exams are then further validated by the American Council on Education and studies that confirm the use of AP scores for college credits by thousands of colleges and universities nationwide.

The AP Program encourages educators to review these principles with parents and students so they know what to expect in an AP course. Advanced Placement is always a choice, and it should be an informed one. AP teachers should be given the confidence and clarity that once parents have enrolled their child in an AP course, they have agreed to a classroom experience that embodies these principles.

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About AP

The Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies—with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both—while still in high school. Through AP courses in 39 subjects, each culminating in a challenging exam, students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments, and see many sides of an issue—skills that prepare them for college and beyond. Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most challenging curriculum available to them, and research indicates that students who score a 3 or higher on an AP Exam typically experience greater academic success in college and are more likely to earn a college degree than non-AP students. Each AP teacher's syllabus is evaluated and approved by faculty from some of the nation's leading colleges and universities, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores; more than 3,300 institutions worldwide annually receive AP scores.

AP Course Development

In an ongoing effort to maintain alignment with best practices in college-level learning, AP courses and exams emphasize challenging, research-based curricula aligned with higher education expectations.

Individual teachers are responsible for designing their own curriculum for AP courses, selecting appropriate college-level readings, assignments, and resources. This course and exam description presents the content and skills that are the focus of the corresponding college course and that appear on the AP Exam. It also organizes the content and skills into a series of units that represent a sequence found in widely adopted college textbooks and that many AP teachers have told us they follow in order to focus their instruction. The intention of this publication is to respect teachers' time and expertise by providing a roadmap that they can modify and adapt to their local priorities and preferences. Moreover, by organizing the AP course content and skills into units, the AP Program is able to provide teachers and students with formative assessments—Progress Checks—that teachers can assign throughout the year to measure student progress as they acquire content knowledge and develop skills.

Enrolling Students: Access, Opportunity, and Readiness

The AP Program welcomes all students willing to challenge themselves with college-level coursework and career preparation. We strongly encourage educators to invite students into AP classes, including students from ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, geographic, or other groups not broadly participating in a school's AP program. We believe that readiness for AP is attainable, and that educators can expand readiness by opening access to Pre-AP course work. We commit to support educators and communities in their efforts to make AP courses widely available, advancing students in their plans for college and careers.

Offering AP Courses: The AP Course Audit

The AP Program unequivocally supports the principle that each school implements its own curriculum that will enable students to develop the content understandings and skills described in the course framework.

While the unit sequence represented in this publication is optional, the AP Program does have a short list of curricular and resource requirements that must be fulfilled before a school can label a course "Advanced Placement" or "AP." Schools wishing to offer AP courses must participate in the AP Course Audit, a process through which AP teachers' course materials are reviewed by college faculty. The AP Course Audit was created to provide teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curricular and resource requirements for AP courses and to help colleges and universities validate courses marked "AP" on students' transcripts. This process ensures that AP teachers' courses meet or exceed the curricular and resource expectations that college and secondary school faculty have established for college-level courses.

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The AP Course Audit form is submitted by the AP teacher and the school principal (or designated administrator) to confirm awareness and understanding of the curricular and resource requirements. A syllabus or course outline, detailing how course requirements are met, is submitted by the AP teacher for review by college faculty.

Please visit the **AP Course Audit** website for more information to support the preparation and submission of materials for the AP Course Audit.

How the AP Program Is Developed

The scope of content for an AP course and exam is derived from an analysis of hundreds of syllabi and course offerings of colleges and universities. Using this research and data, a committee of college faculty and expert AP teachers work within the scope of the corresponding college course to articulate what students should know and be able to do upon the completion of the AP course. The resulting course framework is the heart of this course and exam description and serves as a blueprint of the content and skills that can appear on an AP Exam.

The AP Test Development Committees are responsible for developing each AP Exam, ensuring the exam questions are aligned to the course framework. The AP Exam development process is a multiyear endeavor; all AP Exams undergo extensive review, revision, piloting, and analysis to ensure that questions are accurate, fair, and valid, and that there is an appropriate spread of difficulty across the questions.

Committee members are selected to represent a variety of perspectives and institutions (public and private, small and large schools and colleges), and a range of gender, racial/ethnic, and regional groups. A list of each subject's current AP Test Development Committee members is available on **AP Central®**.

Throughout AP course and exam development, College Board gathers feedback from various stakeholders in both secondary schools and higher education institutions. This feedback is carefully considered to ensure that AP courses and exams are able to provide students with a college-level learning experience and the opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications for advanced placement or college credit.

How AP Exams Are Scored

The exam scoring process, like the course and exam development process, relies on the expertise of both AP teachers and college faculty. While multiple-choice questions are scored by machine, the free-response questions and through-course performance assessments, as applicable, are scored by thousands of college faculty and expert AP teachers. Most are scored at the annual AP Reading, while a small portion is scored online. All AP Readers are thoroughly trained, and their work is monitored throughout the Reading for fairness and consistency. In each subject, a highly respected college faculty member serves as Chief Faculty Consultant and, with the help of AP Readers in leadership positions, maintains the accuracy of the scoring standards. Scores on the free-response questions and performance assessments are weighted and combined with the results of the computer-scored multiple-choice questions, and this raw score is converted into a composite AP score on a 1–5 scale.

AP Exams are **not** norm-referenced or graded on a curve. Instead, they are criterion-referenced, which means that every student who meets the criteria for an AP score of 2, 3, 4, or 5 will receive that score, no matter how many students that is. The criteria for the number of points students must earn on the AP Exam to receive scores of 3, 4, or 5—the scores that research consistently validates for credit and placement purposes—include:

- The number of points successful college students earn when their professors administer AP Exam questions to them.
- Performance that researchers have found to be predictive of an AP student succeeding when placed into a subsequent higher-level college course.
- The number of points college faculty indicate, after reviewing each AP question, that they expect is necessary to achieve each AP grade level.

Using and Interpreting AP Scores

The extensive work done by college faculty and AP teachers in the development of the course and exam and throughout the scoring process ensures that AP Exam scores accurately represent students' achievement in the equivalent college course. Frequent and regular research studies establish the validity of AP scores as follows:

AP Score	Credit Recommendation	College Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A
4	Well qualified	A-, B+, B
3	Qualified	B-, C+, C
2	Possibly qualified	n/a
1	No recommendation	n/a

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While colleges and universities are responsible for setting their own credit and placement policies, most private colleges and universities award credit and/or advanced placement for AP scores of 3 or higher. Additionally, most states in the U.S. have adopted statewide credit policies that ensure college credit for scores of 3 or higher at public colleges and universities. To confirm a specific college's AP credit/placement policy, use the search engine available on the **AP Credit Policy Search** page.

BECOMING AN AP READER

Each June, thousands of AP teachers and college faculty members from around the world gather for seven days in multiple locations to evaluate and score the free-response sections of the AP Exams. Ninety-eight percent of surveyed educators who took part in the AP Reading say it was a positive experience.

There are many reasons to consider becoming an AP Reader, including opportunities to:

- **Bring positive changes to the classroom:** Surveys show that the vast majority of returning AP Readers—both high school and college educators—make improvements to the way they teach or score because of their experience at the AP Reading.
- **Gain in-depth understanding of AP Exam and AP scoring standards:** AP Readers gain exposure to the quality and depth of the responses from the entire pool of AP Exam takers, and thus are better able to assess their students' work in the classroom.
- **Receive compensation:** AP Readers are compensated for their work during the Reading. Expenses, lodging, and meals are covered for Readers who travel.
- **Score from home:** AP Readers have online distributed scoring opportunities for certain subjects. Check the **AP Reader** site for details.
- **Earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs):** AP Readers earn professional development hours and CEUs that can be applied to PD requirements by states, districts, and schools.

How to Apply

Visit the **Become an AP Reader** site for eligibility requirements and to start the application process.

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AP Resources and Supports

By completing a simple activation process at the start of the school year, teachers and students receive access to a robust set of classroom resources.

AP Classroom

AP Classroom is a dedicated online platform designed to support teachers and students throughout their AP experience. The platform provides a variety of powerful resources and tools to provide yearlong support to teachers and enable students to receive meaningful feedback on their progress.

UNIT GUIDES

Appearing in this publication and on AP Classroom, these planning guides outline all required course content and skills, organized into commonly taught units. Each unit guide suggests a sequence and pacing of content, scaffolds skill instruction across units, organizes content into topics, and provides tips on taking the AP Exam.

PROGRESS CHECKS

Formative AP questions for every unit provide feedback to students on the areas where they need to focus. Available online, Progress Checks measure knowledge and skills through multiple-choice questions with rationales to explain correct and incorrect answers, and free-response questions with scoring information.

MY REPORTS

My Reports provides teachers with a one-stop shop for student results on all assignment types, including Progress Checks. Teachers can view class trends and see where students struggle with content and skills that will be assessed on the AP Exam. Students can view their own progress over time to improve their performance before the AP Exam.

QUESTION BANK

The Question Bank is a searchable library of all AP questions that teachers use to build custom practice for their students. Teachers can create and assign assessments with formative topic questions or questions from practice or released AP Exams.

Class Section Setup and Enrollment

- Teachers and students sign in to or create their College Board accounts.
- Teachers confirm that they have added the course they teach to their AP Course Audit account and have had it approved by their school's administrator.
- Teachers or AP coordinators, depending on who the school has decided is responsible, set up class sections so students can access AP resources and have exams ordered on their behalf.
- Students join class sections with a join code provided by their teacher or AP coordinator.
- Students will be asked for additional information upon joining their first class section.

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Instructional Model

Integrating AP resources throughout the course can help students develop the course skills and conceptual understandings. The instructional model outlined below shows possible ways to incorporate AP resources into the classroom.

Plan

Teachers may consider the following approaches as they plan their instruction before teaching each unit.

- Review the overview at the start of each **Unit Guide** to identify essential questions, conceptual understandings, and skills for each unit.
- Use the **Unit at a Glance** table to identify related topics that build toward a common understanding, and then plan appropriate pacing for students.
- Identify useful strategies in the **Instructional Approaches** section to help teach the concepts and skills.

Teach

When teaching, supporting resources can be used to build students' conceptual understanding and mastery of skills.

- Use the topic pages in the **Unit Guides** to identify the required content.
- Integrate the content with a skill, considering any appropriate scaffolding.
- Employ any of the instructional strategies previously identified.
- Use the available resources, including **AP Daily**, on the topic pages to bring a variety of assets into the classroom.

Assess

Teachers can measure student understanding of the content and skills covered in the unit and provide actionable feedback to students.

- As you teach each topic, use **AP Classroom** to assign student **Topic Questions** as a way to continuously check student understanding and provide just in time feedback.
- At the end of each unit, use **AP Classroom** to assign students **Progress Checks**, as homework or an in-class task.
- Provide question-level feedback to students through answer rationales; provide unit- and skill-level formative feedback using **My Reports**.
- Create additional practice opportunities using the **Question Bank** and assign them through **AP Classroom**.

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About the AP U.S. Government and Politics Course

AP U.S. Government and Politics provides a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behaviors. Underpinning the required content of the course are several big ideas that allow students to create meaningful connections among concepts throughout the course.

Students will also engage in skill development that requires them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, they will complete a political science research or applied civics project.

College Course Equivalent

AP U.S. Government and Politics is equivalent to an introductory college course in U.S. government.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisite courses for AP U.S. Government and Politics. Students should be able to read a college-level textbook and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.

Project Requirement

The required project adds a civic component to the course, engaging students in exploring how they can affect, and are affected by, government and politics throughout their lives. The project might have students collect data on a teacher-approved political science topic, participate in a community service activity, or observe and report on the policymaking process of a governing body. Students should plan a presentation that relates their experiences or findings to what they are learning in the course.

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Course Framework

Preface

We offer this course framework for AP U.S. Government and Politics to the American public and education community. Dedicated teams of college professors and AP high school teachers have worked on this framework for years, gathering wide-ranging input and feedback from the public at large.

The committee members and AP Program staff worked with a special intensity and care. We realize that this course is more than just one more class period in a crowded school day; it must be a space in which students immerse themselves in the ideas and knowledge essential to our democracy.

AP U.S. Government and Politics offers students the opportunity to see how individuals and their ideas can shape the world in which they live; it invites them to explore central questions of liberty and justice in practice. The Supreme Court opinions explored in this course are not museum pieces but deeply felt expressions. They all represent real choices and decisions with enormous consequences. We aim for students to read them and discuss them with openness and insight.

The ideas at the heart of the American founding remain as vital and urgent as they were 250 years ago; it is our task as educators to make them vivid once more. As we reflect on this course, five principles become clear:

1. Command of the Constitution lies at the center of this course, the touchstone for informed citizenship and scholarship.
2. Students are not spectators but analysts; they must analyze the documents and debates that formed our republic and animate public life today.
3. Knowledge matters; we define a focused body of shared knowledge while leaving room for the variety of state standards and the imaginations of individual teachers.
4. We can't avoid difficult topics, but we can insist on a principled attention to the best arguments on both sides as students read and write.
5. Civic knowledge is every student's right and responsibility; we therefore have the obligation to make the best learning resources, such as the National Constitution Center's Interactive Constitution, freely available for all.

The aims of this course framework are timeless, and its roots are deeply embedded in the American experiment and the intellectual traditions that animated our founding.

Aristotle famously described humankind as a "political animal." He argued that a person who lives without a political life is incomplete and alone, like an isolated piece on a game board. For Aristotle, participation in civic life is necessary to live fully. In more modern times, President Eisenhower declared that "politics ought to be the part-time profession of every person who would protect the rights and privileges of free people and who would preserve what is good and fruitful in our national heritage."

We are grateful to the AP community of teachers and their colleagues in colleges across our country, whose shared devotion to students forged this course framework. A framework is only an outline of content and skills; the real craft is in the decisions that knowledgeable teachers make every day in the classroom as they develop their curriculum. We are confident that in the hands of AP teachers, this course framework will open doors of opportunity for students throughout their lives.

—From David Coleman, CEO, College Board

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Introduction

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course detailed in this framework reflects what political science teachers, professors, and researchers agree that a college-level government and politics course should teach students to do: analyze and interpret the Constitution, important political documents, and data to better understand the American national government and the political actors who interact with it.

The *AP U.S. Government and Politics Course and Exam Description* defines what representative colleges and universities typically expect students to know and be able to do in order to earn college credit or placement. Students practice the skills used by political scientists by studying data, political writings from the founding era to the present, the structure of the government as established by the Constitution, and constitutional interpretations handed down by the Supreme Court. Students will show mastery of these skills on the exam through a variety of means, including concept application, data analysis, Supreme Court case comparisons, and writing political science arguments.

Although the course framework is designed to provide a clear and detailed description of the course content and skills, it is not a curriculum. Teachers create their own curricula to meet the needs of their students and any state or local requirements.

The National Constitution Center and College Board

In partnership with the National Constitution Center, the AP Program has developed a series of classroom lessons and materials related to the U.S. Constitution. This series includes resources to support instruction in AP U.S. Government and Politics, AP Comparative Government and Politics, AP U.S. History, and AP English Language and Composition. These lessons and resources are available to AP teachers via the course homepages at AP Central and to all teachers through the National Constitution Center's website.

Maintaining Political Balance

AP U.S. Government and Politics is a nonpartisan course and has been endorsed by the National Constitution Center as well as a range of conservative and liberal scholars for its political balance. The required readings are the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, representative Federalist Papers, Brutus No. 1, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." In addition, there are required Supreme Court cases. Additional readings and assignments that teachers select to supplement the course must, as a whole, maintain a political balance. It is expected and required that all AP-authorized courses maintain political balance through a nonpartisan curriculum.

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Course Framework Components

Overview

This course framework provides a description of the what students should know and be able to do to qualify for college credit or placement.

The course framework includes two essential components:

1 COURSE SKILLS

The skills for this course are central to the study and practice of government and politics. Students should develop and apply the described skills on a regular basis over the span of the course.

2 COURSE CONTENT

The course content is organized into commonly taught units of study that provide a suggested sequence for the course. These units comprise the content and conceptual understandings that colleges and universities typically expect students to master to qualify for college credit and/or placement. The content is framed by big ideas, which are cross-cutting concepts that build conceptual understanding and spiral throughout the course.

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Course Skills

This section presents the skills that students should develop during the AP U.S. Government and Politics course and that form the basis of the tasks on the AP Exam.

AP U.S. Government and Politics Course Skills

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course provides skills that describe what a student should be able to do while exploring course concepts. The table on the next page presents these skills.

The unit guides that follow embed and spiral these skills throughout the course, providing teachers with one way to integrate the skills into the course content with sufficient repetition to prepare students to transfer those skills when taking the AP Exam.

More detailed information about teaching these skills can be found in the **Instructional Approaches** section of this publication.

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Course Skills

Skill Category 1	Skill Category 2	Skill Category 3	Skill Category 4	Skill Category 5
Concept Application 1 Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context.	***SCOTUS Application*** 2 Apply Supreme Court decisions.	***Data Analysis*** 3 Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics.	***Source Analysis*** 4 Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources.	***Argumentation*** 5 Develop an argument in essay format.

SKILLS

1.A Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	**2.A** Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.	**3.A** Describe the data presented.	**4.A** Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.	**5.A** Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
1.B Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	**2.B** Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.	**3.B** Describe patterns and trends in data.	**4.B** Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	**5.B** Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.
1.C Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	**2.C** Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.	**3.C** Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.	**4.C** Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	**5.C** Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.
1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.	**2.D** Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a relevant political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.	**3.D** Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	**4.D** Explain how the visual elements of the source (a cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	**5.D** Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation.
1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.		**3.E** Explain possible limitations of the data provided.		
		3.F Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.		

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Course Content

This course framework provides a description of the course requirements necessary for student success. The framework specifies what students should know and be able to do. The framework also encourages instruction that prepares students for advanced political science coursework and active, informed participation in our constitutional democracy.

UNITS

The course content is organized into commonly taught units. The units have been arranged in a logical sequence frequently found in many college courses and textbooks.

Pacing recommendations at the unit level and on the Course at a Glance provide suggestions for how to teach the required course content and administer the Progress Checks. The suggested class periods are based on a schedule in which the class meets five days a week for 45 minutes each day. While these recommendations have been made to aid planning, teachers should of course adjust the pacing based on the needs of their students, alternate schedules (e.g., block scheduling), or their school's academic calendar.

The five units in AP U.S. Government and Politics and their weighting on the multiple-choice section of the AP Exam are listed below.

Units	Exam Weighting
Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy	**15–22%**
Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government	**25–36%**
Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	**13–18%**
Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs	**10–15%**
Unit 5: Political Participation	**20–27%**

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TOPICS

Each unit is broken down into teachable segments called topics. The topic pages contain the required content for each topic. Although most topics can be taught in one or two class periods, teachers are again encouraged to pace the course to suit the needs of their students and school.

BIG IDEAS

The course focuses on five big ideas which allow students to create meaningful connections among concepts across the units. Connecting these big ideas across the different course units will help students develop a deeper conceptual understanding of the course content. Big ideas are spiraled throughout the curriculum through the topics. Below are the big ideas of the course and a brief description of each.

BIG IDEA 1: CONSTITUTIONALISM
The U.S. Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances among branches of government and allocates power between federal and state governments. This system is based on the rule of law and the balance between majority rule and minority rights.

BIG IDEA 2: LIBERTY AND ORDER
Governmental laws and policies balancing order and liberty are based on the U.S. Constitution and have been interpreted differently over time.

BIG IDEA 3: CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY
Popular sovereignty, individualism, and republicanism are important considerations of U.S. laws and policymaking and assume citizens will engage and participate

BIG IDEA 4: COMPETING POLICYMAKING INTERESTS
Multiple actors and institutions interact to produce and implement possible policies.

BIG IDEA 5: METHODS OF POLITICAL ANALYSIS
Using various types of analyses, political scientists measure how U.S. political behavior, attitudes, ideologies, and institutions are shaped by a number of factors over time.

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Spiraling the Big Ideas

The following table shows how the big ideas spiral across units.

Big Ideas	Unit 1 *Foundations of American Democracy*	Unit 2 *Interactions Among Branches of Government*	Unit 3 *Civil Liberties and Civil Rights*	Unit 4 *American Political Ideologies and Beliefs*	Unit 5 *Political Participation*
Constitutionalism	✓	✓	✓		
Liberty and Order	✓		✓		
Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy			✓		✓
Competing Policymaking Interests	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Methods of Political Analysis				✓	✓

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Course at a Glance

Plan

The Course at a Glance provides a useful visual organization of the AP U.S. Government and Politics curricular components, including:

- Sequence of units, along with approximate weighting and suggested pacing. Please note, pacing options are provided for teaching the course for a full year and for a single semester.
- Progression of topics within each unit.
- Spiraling of the skills across all units.

Teach

COURSE SKILLS

Course skills spiral across units.

1 Concept Application	3 Data Analysis
2 SCOTUS Application	4 Source Analysis
	5 Argumentation

Assess

Assign the Progress Checks—either as homework or in class—for each unit. Each Progress Check contains formative multiple-choice and free-response questions. The feedback from the Progress Checks shows students the areas where they need to focus.

UNIT 1 Foundations of American Democracy

~16/~8 Class Periods | **15–22%** AP Exam Weighting

1	**1.1** Ideals of Democracy
4	**1.2** Types of Democracy
1	**1.3** Government Power and Individual Rights
4	**1.4** Challenges of the Articles of Confederation
1	**1.5** Ratification of the U.S. Constitution
4	**1.6** Principles of American Government
5	**1.7** Relationship between the States and National Government
2	**1.8** Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism
5	**1.9** Federalism in Action

UNIT 2 Interactions Among Branches of Government

~28/~14 Class Periods | **25–36%** AP Exam Weighting

1	**2.1** Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives
3	**2.2** Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress
2	**2.3** Congressional Behavior
3	**2.4** Roles and Powers of the President
1	**2.5** Checks on the Presidency
4	**2.6** Expansion of Presidential Power
1	**2.7** Presidential Communication
2	**2.8** The Judicial Branch
1	**2.9** The Role of the Judicial Branch
2	**2.10** The Court in Action
1	**2.11** Checks on the Judicial Branch
4	**2.12** The Bureaucracy
1	**2.13** Discretionary and Rulemaking Authority
3	**2.14** Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable
3	**2.15** Policy and the Branches of Government

Progress Check 1

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions
Free-response: 3 questions
- Concept Application
- Argument Essay (partial)
- Argument Essay (partial)

Progress Check 2

Multiple-choice: ~45 questions
Free-response: 3 questions
- Concept Application
- Quantitative Analysis
- SCOTUS Comparison

NOTE: Partial versions of the free-response questions are provided to prepare students for more complex, full questions that they will encounter on the AP Exam.

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UNIT 3 Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

~26/~13 Class Periods | **13–18%** AP Exam Weighting

1	3.1	The Bill of Rights
2	3.2	First Amendment: Freedom of Religion
5	3.3	First Amendment: Freedom of Speech
4	3.4	First Amendment: Freedom of the Press
4	3.5	Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms
5	3.6	Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety
2	3.7	Selective Incorporation
5	3.8	Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused
1	3.9	Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy
4	3.10	Social Movements and Equal Protection
2	3.11	Government Responses to Social Movements
2	3.12	Balancing Minority and Majority Rights
1	3.13	Affirmative Action

Progress Check 3

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions
Free-response: 3 questions
- SCOTUS Comparison
- Argument Essay (partial)
- Argument Essay (partial)

UNIT 4 American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

~22/~11 Class Periods | **10–15%** AP Exam Weighting

1	4.1	American Attitudes About Government and Politics
3	4.2	Political Socialization
3	4.3	Changes in Ideology
4	4.4	Influence of Political Events on Ideology
3	4.5	Measuring Public Opinion
3	4.6	Evaluating Public Opinion Data
1	4.7	Ideologies of Political Parties
4	4.8	Ideology and Policymaking
3	4.9	Ideology and Economic Policy
4	4.10	Ideology and Social Policy

Progress Check 4

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions
Free-response: 3 questions
- Concept Application
- Quantitative Analysis
- Quantitative Analysis

UNIT 5 Political Participation

~18/~9 Class Periods | **20–27%** AP Exam Weighting

1	5.1	Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior
3	5.2	Voter Turnout
1	5.3	Political Parties
4	5.4	How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt
3	5.5	Third-Party Politics
3	5.6	Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking
1	5.7	Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes
5	5.8	Electing a President
5	5.9	Congressional Elections
5	5.10	Modern Campaigns
2	5.11	Campaign Finance
5	5.12	The Media
2	5.13	Changing Media

Progress Check 5

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions
Free-response: 3 questions
- Quantitative Analysis
- Argument Essay
- Argument Essay

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Unit Guides

Introduction

Designed with extensive input from the community of AP U.S. Government and Politics educators, the unit guides offer all teachers helpful guidance in building students' skills and knowledge. The suggested sequence was identified through a thorough analysis of the syllabi of highly effective AP teachers and the organization of typical college textbooks.

This unit structure respects new AP teachers' time by providing one possible sequence they can adopt or modify rather than having to build from scratch. An additional benefit is that these units enable the AP Program to provide interested teachers with formative assessments—the Progress Checks—that they can assign their students at the end of each unit to gauge progress toward success on the AP Exam. However, experienced AP teachers who are satisfied with their current course organization and exam results should feel no pressure to adopt these units, which comprise an optional sequence for this course.

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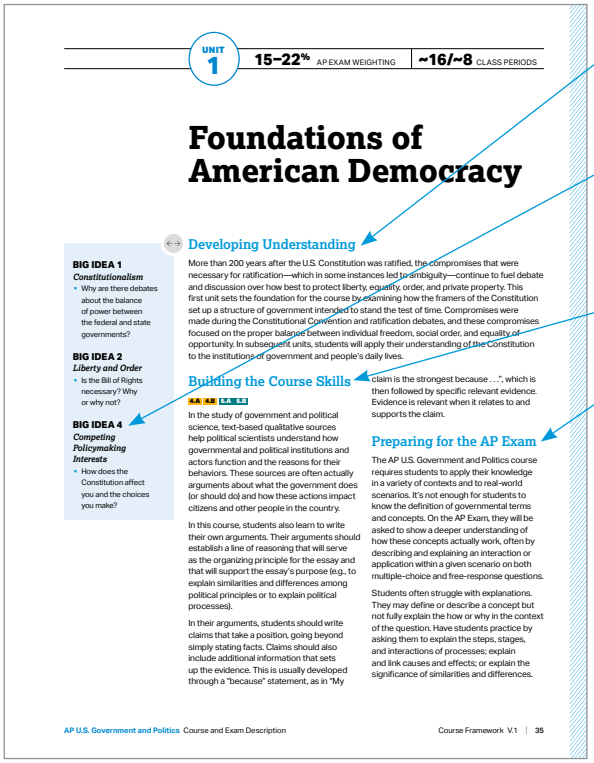
Using the Unit Guides



UNIT 1 | 15–22% AP EXAM WEIGHTING | ~16/~8 CLASS PERIODS

Foundations of American Democracy

BIG IDEA 1
Constitutionalism
- Why are there debates about the balance of power between the federal and state governments?

BIG IDEA 2
Liberty and Order
- Is the Bill of Rights necessary? Why or why not?

BIG IDEA 4
Competing Policymaking Interests
- How does the Constitution affect you and the choices you make?

Developing Understanding

More than 200 years after the U.S. Constitution was ratified, the compromises that were necessary for ratification—which in some instances led to ambiguity—continue to fuel debate and discussion over how best to protect liberty, equality, order, and private property. This first unit sets the foundation for the course by examining how the framers of the Constitution set up a structure of government intended to stand the test of time. Compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises focused on the proper balance between individual freedom, social order, and equality of opportunity. In subsequent units, students will apply their understanding of the Constitution to the institutions of government and people's daily lives.

Building the Course Skills

4.A 4.B 5.A 5.B

In the study of government and political science, text-based qualitative sources help political scientists understand how governmental and political institutions and actors function and the reasons for their behaviors. These sources are often actually arguments about what the government does (or should do) and how these actions impact citizens and other people in the country.

In this course, students also learn to write their own arguments. Their arguments should establish a line of reasoning that will serve as the organizing principle for the essay and that will support the essay's purpose (e.g., to explain similarities and differences among political principles or to explain political processes).

In their arguments, students should write claims that take a position, going beyond simply stating facts. Claims should also include additional information that sets up the evidence. This is usually developed through a "because" statement, as in "My claim is the strongest because . . .", which is then followed by specific relevant evidence. Evidence is relevant when it relates to and supports the claim.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course requires students to apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts and to real-world scenarios. It's not enough for students to know the definition of governmental terms and concepts. On the AP Exam, they will be asked to show a deeper understanding of how these concepts actually work, often by describing and explaining an interaction or application within a given scenario on both multiple-choice and free-response questions.

Students often struggle with explanations. They may define or describe a concept but not fully explain the how or why in the context of the question. Have students practice by asking them to explain the steps, stages, and interactions of processes; explain and link causes and effects; or explain the significance of similarities and differences.

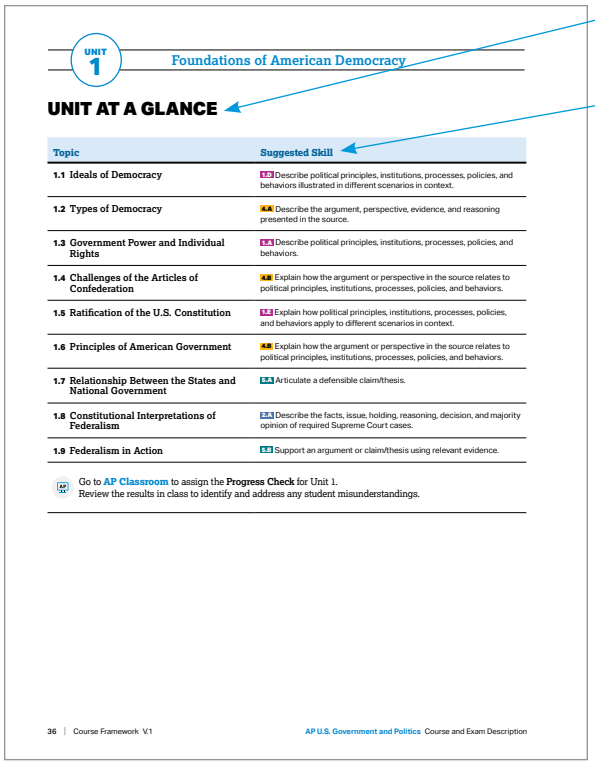
UNIT OPENERS

Developing Understanding provides an overview that contextualizes and situates the key content of the unit within the scope of the course.

Big ideas are cross-cutting concepts that build conceptual understanding across units. The **essential questions** are thought-provoking questions that motivate students and inspire inquiry.

Building the Course Skills describes specific aspects of the practices that are appropriate to focus on in that unit.

Preparing for the AP Exam provides helpful tips and common student misunderstandings identified from prior exam data.



UNIT 1 | Foundations of American Democracy

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
1.1 Ideals of Democracy	1.C Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
1.2 Types of Democracy	4.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
1.3 Government Power and Individual Rights	1.A Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.4 Challenges of the Articles of Confederation	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.5 Ratification of the U.S. Constitution	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
1.6 Principles of American Government	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.7 Relationship Between the States and National Government	5.A Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
1.8 Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism	2.A Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
1.9 Federalism in Action	6.A Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.

Go to **AP Classroom** to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 1.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

The **Unit at a Glance table** shows the topics and suggested skills.

The **suggested skill** for each topic shows one way teachers can link the content in that topic to a specific AP U.S. Government and Politics skill. The individual skill has been thoughtfully chosen in a way that allows teachers to spiral those skills throughout the course. The questions on the Progress Checks are based on this pairing. However, AP Exam questions can pair the content with any of the skills.

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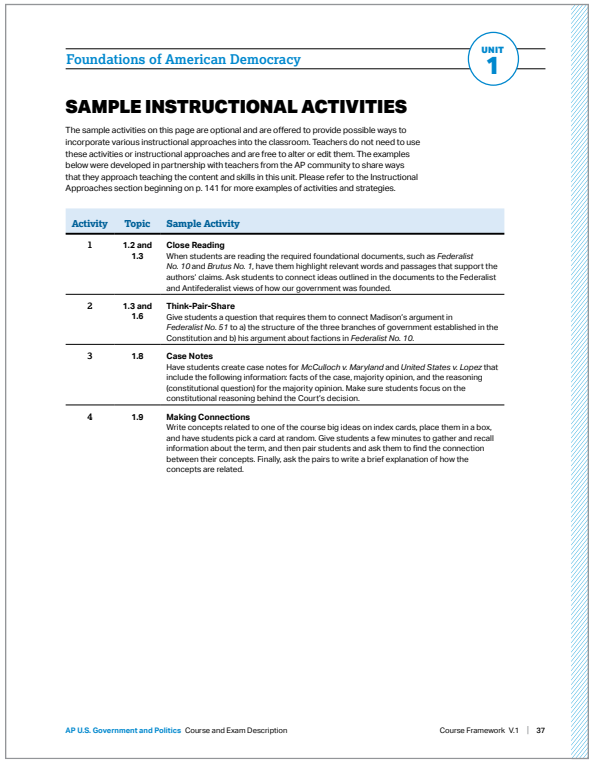
Using the Unit Guides



Foundations of American Democracy

UNIT 1

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	1.2 and 1.3	**Close Reading** When students are reading the required foundational documents, such as *Federalist No. 10* and *Brutus No. 1*, have them highlight relevant words and passages that support the authors' claims. Ask students to connect ideas outlined in the documents to the Federalist and Antifederalist views of how our government was founded.
2	1.3 and 1.6	**Think-Pair-Share** Give students a question that requires them to connect Madison's argument in *Federalist No. 51* to a) the structure of the three branches of government established in the Constitution and b) his argument about factions in *Federalist No. 10*.
3	1.8	**Case Notes** Have students create case notes for *McCulloch v. Maryland* and *United States v. Lopez* that include the following information: facts of the case, majority opinion, and the reasoning (constitutional question) for the majority opinion. Make sure students focus on the constitutional reasoning behind the Court's decision.
4	1.9	**Making Connections** Write concepts related to one of the course big ideas on index cards, place them in a box, and have students pick a card at random. Give students a few minutes to gather and recall information about the term, and then pair students and ask them to find the connection between their concepts. Finally, ask the pairs to write a brief explanation of how the concepts are related.

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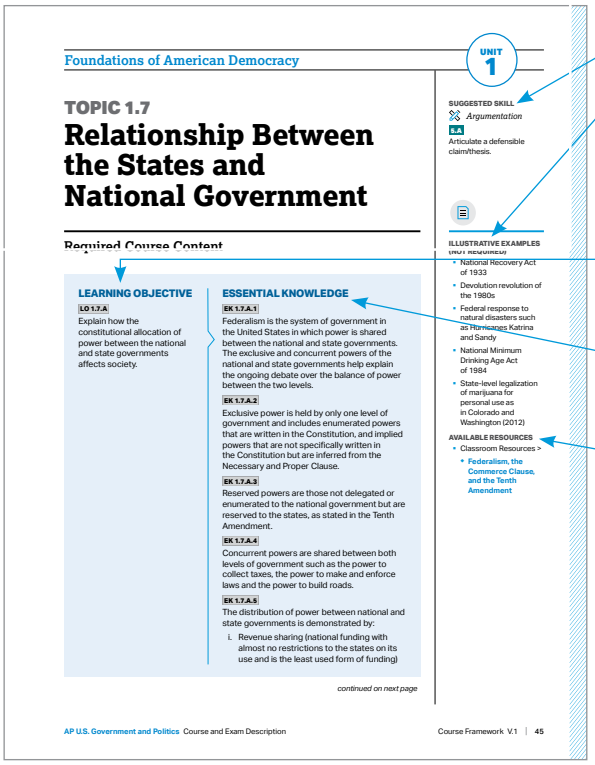
The **Sample Instructional Activities** page includes optional activities that can help tie together the content and skills of a particular topic.



Foundations of American Democracy

UNIT 1

TOPIC 1.7

Relationship Between the States and National Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.7.A

Explain how the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments affects society.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.7.A.1

Federalism is the system of government in the United States in which power is shared between the national and state governments. The exclusive and concurrent powers of the national and state governments help explain the ongoing debate over the balance of power between the two levels.

EK 1.7.A.2

Exclusive power is held by only one level of government and includes enumerated powers that are written in the Constitution, and implied powers that are not specifically written in the Constitution but are inferred from the Necessary and Proper Clause.

EK 1.7.A.3

Reserved powers are those not delegated or enumerated to the national government but are reserved to the states, as stated in the Tenth Amendment.

EK 1.7.A.4

Concurrent powers are shared between both levels of government such as the power to collect taxes, the power to make and enforce laws and the power to build roads.

EK 1.7.A.5

The distribution of power between national and state governments is demonstrated by:

- Revenue sharing (national funding with almost no restrictions to the states on its use and is the least used form of funding)

continued on next page

SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.A

Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

- National Recovery Act of 1933
- Devolution revolution of the 1980s
- Federal response to natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy
- National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984
- State-level legalization of marijuana for personal use as in Colorado and Washington (2012)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources >
- Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment

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TOPIC PAGES

The **suggested skill** offers a possible skill to pair with the topic.

Optional readings and illustrative examples: Where relevant, a list of optional readings and illustrative examples are provided as additional resources, should teachers choose to use them. The list includes common historical documents and secondary sources from a variety of political perspectives.

Learning objectives define what a student should know and be able to do.

Essential knowledge statements describe the knowledge required to perform the learning objective.

Where possible, **available resources** are listed that might help teachers address a particular topic in their classroom.

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Required Foundational Documents

Foundational documents are necessary for students to understand the philosophical underpinnings and political values of the U.S. political system. The foundational documents serve as the focus of AP Exam questions alongside the required skills, learning objectives, and essential knowledge statements. Source analysis of these documents helps students gain an understanding of how philosophical discussions and debates shaped the architecture of the government. Teachers are encouraged to also use both classic and contemporary scholarly writings in political science to promote the comparison of political ideas and their application to recent events.

The following is a list of required Foundational Documents.

Required Foundational Documents

- **THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION**
- **BRUTUS NO.1**
  To the Citizens of the State of New-York
- **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES (INCLUDING THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS)**
- **THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**
- **EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION**
- **FEDERALIST NO. 10**
  The Same Subject Continued: The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection
- **FEDERALIST NO. 39**
  Conformity of the Plan to Republican Principles
- **FEDERALIST NO. 51**
  The Structure of the Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances Between the Different Departments
- **FEDERALIST NO. 70**
  The Executive Department Further Considered
- **FEDERALIST NO. 78**
  The Judiciary Department
- **GETTYSBURG ADDRESS (BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN)**
- ***"LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL"* (BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.)**
- **CORE PRINCIPLES FROM ADAM SMITH'S *"THE WEALTH OF NATIONS"***

continued on next page

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Foundational documents are named in specific topics within the Course Framework; however, the concepts within these documents are also present in other topics and units. The table below indicates both where the foundational document is named in the Course Framework (bold Learning Objectives), and where the documents are also relevant to other Learning Objectives.

Please note: While the Constitution is a required foundational document, it is not listed explicitly below because it is applicable to nearly all course learning objectives.

Foundational Document	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
The Articles of Confederation	1.3.A **1.4.A** 1.5.A 1.7.A		3.7.A		
Brutus No. 1	**1.2.A** **1.3.A**				
The Declaration of Independence	**1.1.A** 1.2.A 1.3.A				
Emancipation Proclamation	1.1.A 1.5.A	2.4.A 2.5.A	3.10.A **3.12.A**		
Federalist No. 10	**1.2.A** **1.3.A** 1.4.A 1.9.A	2.1.A 2.2.A 2.3.A 2.4.A 2.5.A 2.6.A		4.7.A 4.8.A 4.9.A 4.10.A	5.3.A 5.4.A 5.5.A 5.6.A 5.7.A 5.10.A 5.11.A
Federalist No. 39	1.1.A 1.5.A **1.7.A** 1.8.A 1.9.A				
Federalist No. 51	1.4.A 1.5.A **1.6.A** 1.6.B 1.9.A	2.2.A 2.3.A 2.4.A 2.5.A 2.6.A 2.8.A 2.10.A 2.11.B 2.14.A 2.15.A			
Federalist No. 70	1.6.A	2.4.A 2.5.A **2.6.A** 2.7.A 2.8.A 2.12.A 2.13.A 2.14.A 2.15.A			

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Foundational Document	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
Federalist No. 78		**2.8.A** 2.9.A 2.10.A 2.11.A 2.11.B			
Gettysburg Address	**1.1.A**	2.4.A 2.7.A	3.10.A 3.11.A		
Letter from a Birmingham Jail			3.1.A 3.1.B 3.3.A 3.4.A 3.6.A 3.7.A 3.8.A **3.10.A** 3.11.A 3.12.A		5.7.A
The Writings of Adam Smith, including a study of the principles written in *The Wealth of Nations*				**4.1.A** 4.2.A 4.8.A 4.9.A 4.9.B	

Information about many constitutional issues can be found on the National Constitution Center's website. This same information is also available for download for e-readers, tablets, and other mobile devices through the National Constitution Center's Interactive Constitution App.

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Required Supreme Court Cases

Required cases decided by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) provide instructional opportunities to study each case in-depth and to make connections between course concepts. AP Exam questions will ask students to describe important details from these cases, explain how those details relate to concepts in the course, and compare required cases with other Supreme Court cases. Any non-required Supreme Court case that appears on AP Exams will be accompanied by a summary containing all information necessary to compare the non-required case to required SCOTUS cases.

The required Supreme Court cases are widely considered essential content in college courses. Some of the cases may be seen as controversial and some were decided by thin majorities (5 to 4 decisions). Students are not expected or required to either agree or disagree with the Court's decision. While students will not need to know any dissenting (or concurring) opinions from required cases, teachers should encourage students to be familiar with the legal arguments on both sides of leading important constitutional cases and thoughtfully analyze the majority and dissenting opinions.

Students should learn the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases. The table below provides a brief definition for these terms.

Term	Definition
SCOTUS	Supreme Court of the United States
Facts	The relevant events of a case that occurred before courts became involved
Issue	A legal or Constitutional question the court considers in a case
Holding	The court's response to the issue being considered in a case
Reasoning	The court's explanation of a holding
Decision	The outcome of a case that includes a discussion of the facts, issue, holding, and reasoning
Opinion	An analysis of the court's decision, written by the justices. The majority opinion is agreed upon by more than half of the justices

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The following is a list of required Supreme Court cases and a brief description of their holdings.

Required Supreme Court Cases

- **MARBURY V. MADISON (1803)**
  In deciding this case about judicial appointments, the court established the principle of judicial review, empowering the Supreme Court to declare an act of the legislative or executive branch unconstitutional.
- **MCCULLOCH V. MARYLAND (1819)**
  In deciding this case about a national bank and state taxes, the court established supremacy of the U.S. Constitution and federal laws over state laws.
- **SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES (1919)**
  Speech creating a "clear and present danger" was not protected by the First Amendment and could be limited.
- **BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954)**
  Race-based school segregation violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- **BAKER V. CARR (1962)**
  This case held that redistricting did not raise political questions, allowing federal courts to hear other cases that challenge redistricting plans that may violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- **ENGEL V. VITALE (1962)**
  School sponsorship of religious activities violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.
- **GIDEON V. WAINWRIGHT (1963)**
  In this case, the Sixth Amendment's right to an attorney extends procedural due process protections to felony defendants in state courts.
- **TINKER V. DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (1969)**
  A prohibition against public school students wearing black armbands in school to protest the Vietnam War violated the students' freedom of speech protections in the First Amendment.
- **NEW YORK TIMES CO. V. UNITED STATES (1971)**
  This case bolstered the freedom of the press protections of the First Amendment, establishing a "heavy presumption against prior restraint" even in cases involving national security.
- **WISCONSIN V. YODER (1972)**
  Compelling Amish students to attend school past the eighth grade violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.
- **SHAW V. RENO (1993)**
  Under the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, majority-minority districts, created under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, may be constitutionally challenged by voters if race is the only factor used in creating the district.
- **UNITED STATES V. LOPEZ (1995)**
  Congress exceeded its power under the Commerce Clause when it made possession of a gun in a school zone a federal crime.
- **MCDONALD V. CHICAGO (2010)**
  The Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms for self-defense is applicable to the states.
- **CITIZENS UNITED V. FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (2010)**
  Political spending by corporations, associations, and labor unions is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment.

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Students should also learn how these Supreme Court decisions relate to course content. The SCOTUS Cross-Reference table suggests how the study of Supreme Court cases can provide an opportunity to show relationships between various course concepts. Teachers and students may choose more than one place within the course to study required Supreme Court cases.

Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
Marbury v. Madison (1803)	1.1.A				
	1.6.A				
	1.6.B				
		2.8.A			
		2.11.A			
		2.11.B			
		2.15.B			
				4.1.A	
McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)	1.1.A				
	1.3.A				
	1.4.A				
	1.5.A				
	1.7.A				
	1.8.A				
		2.1.A			
		2.11.A			
Schenck v. United States (1919)	1.1.A				
	1.5.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.1.B		
			3.3.A		
			3.12.A		
				4.8.A	
				4.10.A	
Brown v. Board of Education (1954)		2.11.A			
		2.11.B			
			3.9.A		
			3.10.A		
			3.11.A		
			3.12.A		
				4.3.A	
				4.10.A	

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Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
Baker v. Carr (1961)	1.2.A				
	1.6.B				
	1.7.A				
		2.1.A			
		2.3.A			
		2.10.A			
					5.1.A
					5.2.A
Engel v. Vitale (1962)	1.1.A				
	1.6.A				
	1.8.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.2.A		
			3.7.A		
			3.10.A		
				4.10.A	
Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)	1.1.A				
	1.6.A				
	1..8.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.7.A		
			3.8.A		
			3.8.A		
Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)	1.1.A				
	1.2.A				
	1.3.A				
	1.5.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.3.A		
			3.6.A		
				4.8.A	
New York Times Company v. US (1971)	1.1.A				
		2.6.A			
		2.8.A			
		2.9.A			

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Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
		2.11.A			
			3.1.A		
			3.4.A		
					5.12.A
Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)	1.3.A				
	1.6.A				
	1.8.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.2.A		
			3.7.A		
			3.10.A		
				4.10.A	
Shaw v. Reno (1993)	1.2.A				
	1.7.A				
	1.9.A				
		2.2.A			
		2.3.A			
					5.1.A
					5.2.A
					5.9.A
United States v. Lopez (1995)	1.5.A				
	1.7.A				
	1.8.A				
	1.9.A				
		2.10.A			
			3.1.A		
			3.5.A		
			3.6.A		
McDonald v. Chicago (2010)	1.4.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.5.A		
			3.6.A		
			3.7.A		
				4.7.A	

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Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
					5.6.A
					5.7.A
Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)	1.2.A				
		2.13.A			
			3.1.A		
			3.3.A		
					5.6.A
					5.7.A
					5.10.A
					5.11.A

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

UNIT 1

Foundations of American Democracy

15–22%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING

~16/~8
CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to **AP Classroom** to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 1

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions
Free-response: 3 questions

- Concept Application
- Argument Essay (partial)
- Argument Essay (partial)

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UNIT 1

15–22% AP EXAM WEIGHTING | **~16/~8** CLASS PERIODS

Foundations of American Democracy

BIG IDEA 1
Constitutionalism
- Why are there debates about the balance of power between the federal and state governments?

BIG IDEA 2
Liberty and Order
- Is the Bill of Rights necessary? Why or why not?

BIG IDEA 4
Competing Policymaking Interests
- How does the Constitution affect you and the choices you make?

Developing Understanding

More than 200 years after the U.S. Constitution was ratified, the compromises that were necessary for ratification—which in some instances led to ambiguity—continue to fuel debate and discussion over how best to protect liberty, equality, order, and private property. This first unit sets the foundation for the course by examining how the framers of the Constitution set up a structure of government intended to stand the test of time. Compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises focused on the proper balance between individual freedom, social order, and equality of opportunity. In subsequent units, students will apply their understanding of the Constitution to the institutions of government and people's daily lives.

Building the Course Skills

4.A 4.B 5.A 5.B

In the study of government and political science, text-based qualitative sources help political scientists understand how governmental and political institutions and actors function and the reasons for their behaviors. These sources are often actually arguments about what the government does (or should do) and how these actions impact citizens and other people in the country.

In this course, students also learn to write their own arguments. Their arguments should establish a line of reasoning that will serve as the organizing principle for the essay and that will support the essay's purpose (e.g., to explain similarities and differences among political principles or to explain political processes).

In their arguments, students should write claims that take a position, going beyond simply stating facts. Claims should also include additional information that sets up the evidence. This is usually developed through a "because" statement, as in "My claim is the strongest because . . .", which is then followed by specific relevant evidence. Evidence is relevant when it relates to and supports the claim.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course requires students to apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts and to real-world scenarios. It's not enough for students to know the definition of governmental terms and concepts. On the AP Exam, they will be asked to show a deeper understanding of how these concepts actually work, often by describing and explaining an interaction or application within a given scenario on both multiple-choice and free-response questions.

Students often struggle with explanations. They may define or describe a concept but not fully explain the how or why in the context of the question. Have students practice by asking them to explain the steps, stages, and interactions of processes; explain and link causes and effects; or explain the significance of similarities and differences.

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UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
1.1 Ideals of Democracy	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
1.2 Types of Democracy	4.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
1.3 Government Power and Individual Rights	1.A Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.4 Challenges of the Articles of Confederation	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.5 Ratification of the U.S. Constitution	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
1.6 Principles of American Government	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.7 Relationship Between the States and National Government	5.A Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
1.8 Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism	2.A Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
1.9 Federalism in Action	5.B Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.

Go to **AP Classroom** to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 1.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

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SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	1.2 and 1.3	**Close Reading** When students are reading the required foundational documents, such as *Federalist No. 10* and *Brutus No. 1*, have them highlight relevant words and passages that support the authors' claims. Ask students to connect ideas outlined in the documents to the Federalist and Antifederalist views of how our government was founded.
2	1.3 and 1.6	**Think-Pair-Share** Give students a question that requires them to connect Madison's argument in *Federalist No. 51* to a) the structure of the three branches of government established in the Constitution and b) his argument about factions in *Federalist No. 10*.
3	1.8	**Case Notes** Have students create case notes for *McCulloch v. Maryland* and *United States v. Lopez* that include the following information: facts of the case, majority opinion, and the reasoning (constitutional question) for the majority opinion. Make sure students focus on the constitutional reasoning behind the Court's decision.
4	1.9	**Making Connections** Write concepts related to one of the course big ideas on index cards, place them in a box, and have students pick a card at random. Give students a few minutes to gather and recall information about the term, and then pair students and ask them to find the connection between their concepts. Finally, ask the pairs to write a brief explanation of how the concepts are related.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Thomas Hobbes's definition of an anarchic "state of nature" in the absence of government, as in the failed state of Somalia
- The Mayflower Compact (1620)
- John Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690)
- Baron de Montesquieu's ideas about separating powers in government found in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748)

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* **Analytical Reading (Declaration of Independence)**

TOPIC 1.1
Ideals of Democracy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.1.A

Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.1.A.1

The U.S. government is based on the following democratic ideals:

i. Natural rights (all people have certain rights that cannot be taken away)
ii. A social contract (an implicit agreement among the people in a society to give up some freedoms to maintain social order)
iii. Popular sovereignty (all government power comes from the consent of its people)
iv. Limited government (a government's power cannot be absolute)

EK 1.1.A.2

The ideal of limited government is ensured by the interaction of these principles:

i. Separation of powers
ii. Checks and balances
iii. Federalism
iv. Republicanism

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.1.A

Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.1.A.3

The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson (with help from Adams and Franklin), restates the philosophy of natural rights, and provides a foundation for popular sovereignty. The U.S. Constitution, drafted by James Madison at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia that was led by George Washington (with important contributions from Hamilton and members of the "Grand Committee"), is an example of a social contract and establishes a system of limited government. The Constitution provides the blueprint for a unique form of democratic government in the United States. The Gettysburg Address, written by Abraham Lincoln and delivered during the U.S. Civil War, reaffirmed equality and popular sovereignty as defining foundations of democracy.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.A

Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.

TOPIC 1.2
Types of Democracy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.2.A

Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, events, or debates in the U.S.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.2.A.1

Representative democracies can take several forms including the following models:

i. Participatory democracy, which emphasizes broad participation in politics and civil society
ii. Pluralist democracy, which emphasizes group-based activism by nongovernmental interests striving for impact on political decision making
iii. Elite democracy, which emphasizes limited participation in politics and civil society

EK 1.2.A.2

Different aspects of the U.S. Constitution as well as the debate between Federalist No. 10 and Brutus No. 1 reflect the tension between the broad participatory model and the more filtered participation of the pluralist and elite models of representative democracy.

EK 1.2.A.3

The three models of representative democracy continue to be reflected in contemporary institutions and political behavior.

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TOPIC 1.3
Government Power and Individual Rights

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.A

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

OPTIONAL READING

- "Letters from the Federal Farmer #1" (Anti-Federalist publication)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* **Analytical Reading (*Federalist No. 10* and *Brutus No. 1*)**

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.3.A

Explain Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.3.A.1

Federalists supported ratification of the Constitution and a strong central government. Madison's arguments in Federalist No. 10 focused on the superiority of a large republic in controlling the "mischiefs of faction," delegating authority to elected representatives and dispersing power between the states and national government.

EK 1.3.A.2

Anti-Federalists opposed the ratification of the Constitution and wanted more power reserved to state governments rather than a strong central government. Anti-Federalist writings, including Brutus No. 1, adhered to popular democratic theory that emphasized the benefits of a small, decentralized republic while warning of the dangers to personal liberty from a large, centralized government.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- State constitutions during the postcolonial period

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  Analytical Reading (Articles of Confederation)

TOPIC 1.4

Challenges of the Articles of Confederation

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.4.A

Explain the relationship between key provisions of the Articles of Confederation, and the debate over granting the federal government greater power formerly reserved to the states.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.4.A.1

Specific incidents and legal challenges that highlighted key weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation are represented by the:

i. Lack of centralized military power to address Shays' Rebellion
ii. Lack of an executive branch to enforce laws, including taxation
iii. Lack of a national court system
iv. Lack of power to regulate interstate commerce
v. Lack of the exclusive power to coin money

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TOPIC 1.5
Ratification of the U.S. Constitution

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.5.A

Explain the impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.5.A.1

Compromises deemed necessary for ratification of the Constitution included the following:

i. Great (Connecticut) Compromise, which created a dual (bicameral) system of congressional representation with the House of Representatives based on each state's population and the Senate representing each state equally
ii. Electoral College, which created a system for electing the president by electors from each state rather than by popular vote or by congressional vote
iii. Three-Fifths Compromise, which provided a formula for calculating a state's enslaved population for purposes of representation in the House and for taxation
iv. Postponing until 1808 a decision whether to ban the importation of enslaved persons
v. Agreement to add a Bill of Rights to address concerns of the Anti-Federalists

EK 1.5.A.2

Debates about self-government during the drafting of the Constitution necessitated the drafting of an amendment process in Article V that entailed either a two-thirds vote in both houses or a proposal from two-thirds of the state legislatures, with final ratification determined by three-fourths of the states.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.5.A

Explain the impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.5.A.3

The compromises necessary to secure ratification of the Constitution left some matters unresolved that continue to generate discussion and debate today.

EK 1.5.A.4

The debate over the role of the national government, the powers of state governments, and the rights of individuals remains at the heart of present-day constitutional issues about democracy and governmental power, as represented by:

i. Debates about government surveillance resulting from the federal government's response to the 9/11 attacks
ii. Debates about the role of government in public school education

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TOPIC 1.6
Principles of American Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 1.6.A Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances.	**EK 1.6.A.1** The specific and separate powers delegated to Congress, the president, and the courts allow each branch to check and balance the power of the other branches, ensuring no one branch becomes too powerful. **EK 1.6.A.2** Federalist No. 51 explains how constitutional provisions of separation of powers and checks and balances control potential abuses by majorities.
LO 1.6.B Explain the effects of separation of powers and checks and balances for the U.S. political system.	**EK 1.6.B.1** Separation of powers and checks and balances creates multiple access points for stakeholders and institutions to influence public policy. **EK 1.6.B.2** Checks and balances and separation of powers allow legal actions to be taken against public officials deemed to have abused their power. Those legal actions include the process of impeachment (the House formally charges an official with abuse of power or misconduct) and removal (if the official is convicted in a Senate impeachment trial).

SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993
- Impeachment proceedings against Presidents Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Bill Clinton
- Congressional response to the Obama administration's executive actions on immigration

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  Analytical Reading (*Federalist No. 51*)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.A

Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- National Recovery Act of 1933
- Devolution revolution of the 1980s
- Federal response to natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy
- National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984
- State-level legalization of marijuana for personal use as in Colorado and Washington (2012)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  - **Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment**

TOPIC 1.7

Relationship Between the States and National Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.7.A

Explain how the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments affects society.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.7.A.1

Federalism is the system of government in the United States in which power is shared between the national and state governments. The exclusive and concurrent powers of the national and state governments help explain the ongoing debate over the balance of power between the two levels. Federalist No. 39 explains that this division of authority combines national and state features to limit the concentration of power in any one part of the government while also allowing multiple access points for political participation.

EK 1.7.A.2

Exclusive power is held by only one level of government and includes enumerated powers that are written in the Constitution, and implied powers that are not specifically written in the Constitution but are inferred from the Necessary and Proper Clause.

EK 1.7.A.3

Reserved powers are those not delegated or enumerated to the national government but are reserved to the states, as stated in the Tenth Amendment.

EK 1.7.A.4

Concurrent powers are shared between both levels of government such as the power to collect taxes, the power to make and enforce laws and the power to build roads.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.7.A

Explain how the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments affects society.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.7.A.5

The distribution of power between national and state governments is demonstrated by:

i. Revenue sharing (national funding with almost no restrictions to the states on its use and is the least used form of funding)
ii. Block grants (national funding with minimal restrictions to the states on its use and is preferred by the states)
iii. Categorical grants (national funding that is restricted to specific categories of expenditures, is preferred by the national government, and is the most commonly used form of funding)
iv. Mandates (requirements by the national government of the states)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.A

Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.

OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Daniel Elazar, "Opening the Third Century of American Federalism: Issues and Prospects," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1990)
- New Deal legislation
- Defense of Marriage Act of 1996 and state marriage laws
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
- Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and *United States v. Morrison* (2000)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  - **Analytical Reading (The Tenth Amendment to the United States)**
  - **Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment**

TOPIC 1.8
Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.8.A

Explain how the balance of power between national and state governments has changed over time based on interpretations of the Supreme Court of the United States.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.8.A.1

The Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment give the national government the power to enforce protections for any person against the states, but Supreme Court interpretations can influence the extent of those protections.

EK 1.8.A.2

The Commerce Clause gives the national government the power to regulate interstate commerce, but Supreme Court interpretations can influence the extent of this power.

EK 1.8.A.3

The Necessary and Proper Clause gives Congress the power to make laws related to carrying out its enumerated powers, but Supreme Court interpretations can influence the extent of these powers.

EK 1.8.A.4

The Supremacy Clause gives the national government and its laws general precedence over states' laws, but Supreme Court interpretations may affect when specific actions exceed this constitutional power.

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TOPIC 1.9
Federalism in Action

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.9.A

Explain how the distribution of powers between national and state governments impacts policymaking.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.9.A.1

The allocation of powers between national and state governments creates multiple access points for stakeholders and institutions to influence public policy.

EK 1.9.A.2

National policymaking is constrained by the sharing of concurrent powers with state governments.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.B

Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  - **Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment**

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

UNIT 2

Interactions Among Branches of Government

25–36%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING

~28/~14
CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to **AP Classroom** to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 2

Multiple-choice: ~45 questions
Free-response: 3 questions

- Concept Application
- Quantitative Analysis
- SCOTUS Comparison

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UNIT 2

25–36% AP EXAM WEIGHTING | **~28/~14** CLASS PERIODS

Interactions Among Branches of Government

BIG IDEA 1
Constitutionalism

- Which branch of government is the most powerful? Why?
- Are there really checks and balances when one political party controls all three branches of government? Why or why not?

BIG IDEA 4
Competing Policymaking Interests

- In what ways has the evolution of government powers affected Americans and their daily lives?

Developing Understanding

In this unit, students continue to explore policymaking, focusing on its complexity and the idea that it is a process involving multiple governmental institutions and actors. Students will look at issues or policies from several different perspectives and then apply their knowledge to better understand the complexity of the policymaking process.

The Constitution grants specific powers to Congress, the presidency, and the courts, each of which exercises informal powers (developed through political practice, tradition, and legislation). Because power is widely distributed, and checks prevent one branch from overreaching or usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern.

Building the Course Skills

2.A 2.B 3.A 3.B

The gerrymandering cases in this unit provide an opportunity to introduce students to Supreme Court case analysis. It can help to start by having students describe the facts of the cases, focusing on the reasoning behind the majority opinion. Students often get stuck on the details of a case, or what they think is fair. Guide them to focus on the constitutional issues the justices applied when deciding the case. This focus will help students connect the details from a required case to other sources.

This unit also introduces students to data analysis. Provide opportunities for students to practice identifying data from different types of graphs. At this point in the course, you can have them practice identifying data, patterns, and trends in the data, and drawing conclusions. Students will need direction in order to know how to draw conclusions and apply information from data. Help them practice these skills by linking data to political behaviors using the different branches of government or budgets of bureaucratic agencies.

Preparing for the AP Exam

On the AP Exam, students will need to make connections between political concepts, Supreme Court cases, and arguments in text-based sources. One way that political scientists often think about those connections is to make comparisons between concepts, and students will need to make comparisons and draw conclusions on both the multiple-choice questions and the free-response questions.

When making comparisons, it's important for students to begin by identifying the relevant categories of comparison (i.e., what characteristic or attribute they should compare). Two common mistakes that students make are discussing similarities and differences that are 1) not relevant based on the given task or 2) not shared by the objects of comparison. Once students have identified an appropriate and relevant category of comparison, they can then develop their explanation of why the similarities or differences exist and why they are significant.

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UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
2.1 Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives	1.C Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
2.2 Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress	3.A Describe the data presented.
2.3 Congressional Behavior	2.A Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
2.4 Roles and Powers of the President	3.B Describe patterns and trends in data.
2.5 Checks on the Presidency	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
2.6 Expansion of Presidential Power	4.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
2.7 Presidential Communication	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
2.8 The Judicial Branch	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.
2.9 The Role of the Judicial Branch	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
2.10 The Court in Action	2.C Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.
2.11 Checks on the Judicial Branch	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
2.12 The Bureaucracy	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
2.13 Discretionary and Rulemaking Authority	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
2.14 Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable	3.C Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.
2.15 Policy and the Branches of Government	3.D Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

Go to **AP Classroom** to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 2.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

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SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	2.2	**Graphic Organizer** Have students complete Venn diagrams comparing the structure, functions, and powers of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Make sure students use the graphic organizer thoughtfully and are not simply "filling in the blanks."
2	2.5	**Quickwrite** As preparation for a free-response question (FRQ) in which students explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors in different contexts (such as in FRQ 1), have them quickwrite ways the president's agenda can affect congressional behavior.
3	2.11	**Socratic Seminar** Use one of the essential questions, such as *Which branch of government is the most powerful? Why?*, to initiate a discussion in which students can illustrate their understanding of the learning objectives and essential knowledge statements.
4	2.15	**Match Claims and Evidence** In early stages of practicing argumentation, ask small groups of students to write claims and supporting evidence statements based on a question that resembles the argument essay prompt (such as one about whether the President or Congress has more power over the bureaucracy). Have groups trade claims and evidence, revise or modify the claims (if necessary), match the claims and evidence, and write statements explaining why the evidence supports the claim.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.C

Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985

TOPIC 2.1
Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.1.A

Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.1.A.1

Republicanism, the democratic principle that the will of the people is reflected in government debates and decisions by their representatives, is shown in the bicameral structure of Congress. The Senate is designed to represent states equally, while the House is designed to represent the people.

EK 2.1.A.2

Different membership sizes influence the formality of debate in each chamber. Debate in the House, which has 435 members, is more formal than in the Senate, with 100 members.

EK 2.1.A.3

Interactions in Congress are affected by the two-party system and term-length differences. One-third of the Senate is elected every two years, creating a continuous legislative body. All House members are elected every two years.

EK 2.1.A.4

The enumerated and implied powers in the Constitution allow Congress to participate in the public policy process by:

i. Passing a federal budget, raising revenue by laying and collecting taxes, borrowing money, and coining money
ii. Declaring war and providing the funds necessary to maintain the armed forces

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.1.A

Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

iii. Determining the process for naturalization by which people can become citizens of the U.S.

iv. Regulating interstate commerce

v. Creating federal courts and their jurisdictions

vi. Enacting legislation under the authority of the necessary and proper clause

vii. Conducting oversight of the executive branch, including federal agencies in the bureaucracy

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.A

Describe the data presented.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Whips
- Calendar assignment
- Rider amendments

TOPIC 2.2
Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.2.A

Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policymaking process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.2.A.1

The structures and powers of the Senate and House are different by design. This difference directly affects the legislative process.

EK 2.2.A.2

Both chambers refer bills to committees, which conduct hearings and debate and mark up bills with revisions and additions. Leadership in committees is determined by the majority political party.

EK 2.2.A.3

Chamber-specific rules and procedures affect the legislative process.

i. In the House, the Speaker is elected by a majority of members and presides over the legislative work in the House. All revenue bills must originate in the House. Rules for debate in the House on a bill are established by the Rules Committee. The House can form a Committee of the Whole in order to expedite debate on bills. An individual representative in the House can file a discharge petition to have a bill brought to the floor for debate, but it is rarely done.

ii. In the Senate, bills are typically brought to the floor by unanimous consent, but a Senator may request a hold on a bill to prevent it from getting to the floor for a vote. During debate, a Senator can use the filibuster (a tactic to prolong debate and delay or prevent a vote on a bill) or make a motion for cloture (a procedure to end a debate).

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.2.A

Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policymaking process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

iii. When a bill passed by both chambers on the same topic has variation in its wording, a conference committee meets to reconcile those differences.

EK 2.2.A.4

Congress must generate a budget that addresses both mandatory and discretionary spending.

i. Mandatory spending is required by law for entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

ii. Discretionary spending is approved on an annual basis for defense spending, education, and infrastructure. As entitlement costs grow, discretionary spending opportunities will decrease unless tax revenues increase, or the budget deficit increases.

EK 2.2.A.5

Pork-barrel legislation (funding for a local project in a larger appropriation bill) and logrolling (exchange of political favors among legislators, such as trading votes, to gain support for legislation) affect the legislative process in both chambers.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.A

Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- David Mayhew's "Is Congress 'the Broken Branch'?" *Boston University Law Review* (2009)
- Barbara Sinclair's "From Sam Rayburn to Newt Gingrich: The Development of the Partisan Congress," Chapter 1 of *Party Wars: Polarization and the Politics of National Policy Making* (2011)

TOPIC 2.3
Congressional Behavior

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.3.A

Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.3.A.1

Congressional behavior and governing effectiveness are influenced by ideological divisions between political parties. Partisan voting (when members of Congress vote based on their political party affiliation) and polarization (when political attitudes move toward ideological extremes) can lead to gridlock (a situation in which no congressional action on legislation can be taken due to a lack of consensus).

EK 2.3.A.2

Gerrymandering, redistricting, and unequal representation of constituencies have been partially addressed by Supreme Court cases that opened the door for equal protection challenges to redistricting.

EK 2.3.A.3

Elections that have led to a divided government (when one party controls the presidency and the other party controls at least one of the chambers of Congress) can lead to more intense partisanship. This partisanship can result in members of Congress voting against presidential initiatives and appointments, especially those of a lame duck president.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.3.A

Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.3.A.4

Accountability to constituents in each chamber is affected by how representatives perceive their roles.

i. A representative who conceives of their role as a trustee will vote on issues based on their own knowledge and judgement.
ii. A representative acting as a delegate sees themselves as an agent of those who elected them and will vote on issues based on the interests of their constituents.
iii. A politico uses a combination of these role conceptions.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.B

Describe patterns and trends in data.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Professional Development > Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 2: Concept Application and Data Analysis

TOPIC 2.4
Roles and Powers of the President

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.4.A

Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.4.A.1

Presidents use powers and perform functions of the office, with support from the Vice-President, Cabinet, and Executive Office of the President, to accomplish a policy agenda.

EK 2.4.A.2

The powers of the president include both formal and informal powers.

i. Vetoes and pocket vetoes are formal powers that enable the president to check Congress, but vetoes can be overridden with a 2/3 vote while pocket vetoes cannot be overridden with a 2/3 vote.
ii. Foreign policy powers that influence relations with foreign nations are both formal (commander-in-chief and treaties) and informal (executive agreements).
iii. Bargaining and persuasion are informal powers that enable the president to secure congressional action.
iv. Executive orders allow the president to manage the federal government and are implied by the president's vested executive power or by power delegated by Congress.
v. Signing statements are informal powers that inform Congress and the public of the president's interpretation of laws passed by Congress and signed by the president.

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TOPIC 2.5
Checks on the Presidency

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.5.A

Explain how the president's agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.5.A.1

Senate confirmation is an important check on appointment powers but there can be a potential for conflict based on who is chosen by the president for appointments, including:

i. Cabinet members
ii. Ambassadors
iii. Some positions within the Executive Office of the President
iv. Supreme Court Justices, Court of Appeals judges, and District Court judges

EK 2.5.A.2

Senate confirmation is an important check on appointment powers, but the president's longest lasting influence lies in life-tenured judicial appointments.

EK 2.5.A.3

Policy conflicts with the congressional agenda (the formal list of policies Congress is considering at any given time) can lead the president to use executive orders and directives to the bureaucracy to address the president's own agenda items.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Conflicts in Vietnam, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Syria
- No Child Left Behind Act (2001)
- Appointments of Sandra Day O'Connor and Thurgood Marshall
- Failed appointments: Robert Bork, John Tower, and Abe Fortas

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* **Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 2: Concept Application and Data Analysis**

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.A

Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.

OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt's State of the Union Address (1941)
- William Howard Taft's *Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers* (1916)
- *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography* (1913)

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  Analytical Reading (*Federalist No. 70*)

TOPIC 2.6

Expansion of Presidential Power

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.6.A

Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.6.A.1

Federalist No. 70 offers justification for a single executive by arguing a strong executive is "essential to the protection of the country against foreign attacks, to the steady administration of the laws, to the protection of property, and to the security of liberty."

EK 2.6.A.2

Passage of the Twenty-Second Amendment, which established presidential term limits, demonstrates concern about the expansion of presidential power.

EK 2.6.A.3

Different perspectives on the presidential role, ranging from a limited to a more expansive interpretation and use of power, continue to be debated in the context of contemporary events.

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TOPIC 2.7
Presidential Communication

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.7.A

Explain how communication technology has changed the president's relationship with the national constituency and the other branches.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.7.A.1

The impact of presidential communication has increased with advances in communication technology.

i. Modern technology, such as social media, allows for rapid responses to political issues.

ii. Nationally broadcast State of the Union messages and the president's bully pulpit are tools for agenda setting that use the media to influence public views about which policies are the most important.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- President Reagan's televised "Address to the Nation on Federal Tax Reduction" (1981)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.B

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  - **Analytical Reading (*Federalist No. 78*)**

TOPIC 2.8
The Judicial Branch

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.8.A

Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other branches.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.8.A.1

The foundation for powers of the judicial branch and the argument for how its independence checks the power of other branches is set forth in the following documents, respectively:

i. Article III of the Constitution
ii. Federalist No. 78

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TOPIC 2.9
The Role of the Judicial Branch

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.9.A

Explain the role of legal precedent in judicial decision making.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.9.A.1

Stare decisis (the legal doctrine under which courts follow legal precedents when deciding cases with similar facts) plays an important role in judicial decision making.

EK 2.9.A.2

Ideological changes in the composition of the Supreme Court due to presidential appointments have led to the Court's establishing new or rejecting existing precedents.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Martin v. Hunter's Lessee* (1816)
- New Deal conflict (Congress)
- *United States v. Nixon* (1974)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.C

Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.

TOPIC 2.10
The Court in Action

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.10.A

Explain how life tenure can lead to debate about the Supreme Court's power.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.10.A.1

Life tenure for justices allows the court to function independent of the current political climate. As a result of this independence, the Court can deliver controversial or unpopular court decisions, which in turn can lead to debate about the court's power.

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TOPIC 2.11
Checks on the Judicial Branch

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 2.11.A Explain how the exercise of judicial review can lead to debate about the Supreme Court's power.	**EK 2.11.A.1** Political discussion about the Supreme Court's power is illustrated by the ongoing debate over differing interpretations of judicial review. i. Judicial activism asserts that judicial review allows the courts to overturn current Constitutional and case precedent or invalidate legislative or executive acts. ii. Judicial restraint asserts that judicial review should be constrained to decisions that adhere to current Constitutional and case precedent.
LO 2.11.B Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court's power.	**EK 2.11.B.1** Restrictions on the Supreme Court are represented by: i. Congressional legislation to modify the impact of prior Supreme Court decisions ii. Ratification of a Constitutional amendment iii. Judicial appointments and confirmations which may shift the ideological balance of the court iv. The president and states delaying implementation of a Supreme Court decision v. Enacting legislation to limit the cases the Supreme Court can hear on appeal by removing the court's jurisdiction over a case

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1970)
- *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974)
- Franklin Roosevelt's court-packing plan
- Sixteenth Amendment and federal income tax

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- Pendleton Civil Service Act (1883)
- Transportation Safety Administration (TSA)

TOPIC 2.12
The Bureaucracy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.12.A

Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.12.A.1

The federal bureaucracy is composed of departments, agencies, commissions, and government corporations that implement policy by:

i. Writing and enforcing regulations
ii. Issuing fines
iii. Testifying before Congress
iv. Forming iron triangles (alliances of congressional committees, bureaucratic agencies, and interest groups that are prominent in specific policy areas)
v. Creating issue networks (temporary coalitions that form to promote a common issue or agenda)

EK 2.12.A.2

The civil service primarily uses a merit system that prioritizes hiring and promotion based on professionalism, specialization, and neutrality, as opposed to political patronage, whereby bureaucratic jobs are politically appointed.

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TOPIC 2.13
Discretionary and Rulemaking Authority

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.13.A

Explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rulemaking and implementation.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.13.A.1

The federal bureaucracy uses discretionary power as delegated by Congress to interpret and implement policies. Through their rulemaking authority, federal bureaucratic agencies utilize their discretion to create and enforce regulations. Bureaucratic agencies include:

i. Department of Homeland Security
ii. Department of Transportation
iii. Department of Veterans Affairs
iv. Department of Education
v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
vi. Federal Elections Commission (FEC)
vii. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.C

Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.

TOPIC 2.14
Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Oversight of intelligence agencies following the 9/11 terrorist attacks
- Joint committees
- Budget and Impoundment Control Act (1974)
- Lyndon B. Johnson's Executive Order 11246 (Affirmative Action and Government Contracts)
- EPA Superfund management under the Reagan administration

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 2.14.A Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch.	**EK 2.14.A.1** Congressional oversight of the bureaucracy to ensure that legislation is implemented as intended includes: i. Review, monitoring, and supervision of bureaucratic agencies ii. Investigation and committee hearings of bureaucratic activity iii. Power of the purse (the ability of Congress to check the bureaucracy by appropriating or withholding funds) **EK 2.14.A.2** As a means to curtail the use of presidential power, congressional oversight serves as a check of executive authorization.
LO 2.14.B Explain how the president ensures that executive branch agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities in concert with the goals of the administration.	**EK 2.14.B.1** Presidential ideology, authority, and influence affect how executive branch agencies carry out the goals of the administration. **EK 2.14.B.2** Compliance monitoring ensures that funds are being used properly and regulations are being followed. Compliance monitoring can pose a challenge to policy implementation.

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TOPIC 2.15
Policy and the Branches of Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.15.A
Explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts.

LO 2.15.B
Explain how the distribution of powers among the three branches of government impacts policymaking.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.15.A.1
Formal and informal powers of Congress, the president, and the courts over the bureaucracy are used to maintain its accountability.

EK 2.15.B.1
The allocation of powers among the three branches of government creates multiple access points for stakeholders and institutions to influence public policy.

EK 2.15.B.2
National policymaking is constrained by the sharing of powers between the three branches.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.D
Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- Legislative veto

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

UNIT 3

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

13–18%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING

~26/~13
CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to **AP Classroom** to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 3

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions
Free-response: 3 questions

- SCOTUS Comparison
- Argument Essay (partial)
- Argument Essay (partial)

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UNIT 3

13–18% AP EXAM WEIGHTING | **~26/~13** CLASS PERIODS

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

BIG IDEA 1
Constitutionalism
- In what ways does the Constitution attempt to limit abuse of government powers?

BIG IDEA 3
Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy
- How can individuals and groups help protect civil liberties and civil rights?

BIG IDEA 4
Competing Policymaking Interests
- Why have Supreme Court decisions about civil liberties and civil rights changed over time?

Developing Understanding

Students will connect the founding principles of our government to the debates over the appropriate balance of liberty and order, noting how citizens and other groups have pursued policy solutions to protect the civil liberties and civil rights of all Americans, laying the foundation for later discussions about other ways citizens can participate in the government.

The U.S. Constitution, primarily through the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment, protects the civil liberties and civil rights of citizens, though the extent of those protections and the need to protect the safety and general welfare of individuals has long been debated. Through social movements, legal challenges, and acts of Congress, citizens have attempted to restrict the government from unduly infringing on individual rights and from denying equal protection under the law.

Building the Course Skills

2.C 5.A 5.B

This unit focuses on the analysis and application of SCOTUS cases. In addition to knowing the facts and decision of the required SCOTUS cases, students should analyze the majority opinion, focusing on the constitutional issues (such as the various interpretations of the Bill of Rights, including the due process clause) considered by the justices. This level of knowledge allows students to think like political scientists and compare two cases that relate to the same constitutional issue and draw conclusions about why the Supreme Court may have ruled in a similar or different way in each case.

Students continue to develop the skill of argumentation in this unit by using relevant evidence to support their claim. When using documents as evidence, students should not focus on summarizing the content of a document, but instead on explaining the significance of the evidence and explaining how and why it supports the claim and line of reasoning.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The SCOTUS comparison free-response question on the AP Exam asks students to go beyond simply identifying the similarities and differences between cases. They apply information from a required case and explain how that information is relevant to a non-required case. Then, students demonstrate the ability to transfer understanding of political concepts, behaviors, or processes from a required Supreme Court case to a non-required one.

Students should be able to use the required Supreme Court cases in other ways, such as applying knowledge about a required case to a reading, a scenario, and possibly a political cartoon. Students often struggle with analyzing political cartoons. They should practice interpreting visual clues and then using these clues to determine the argument and relate it to political principles, institutions, processes, or behaviors.

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UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
3.1 The Bill of Rights	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
3.2 First Amendment: Freedom of Religion	2.A Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
3.3 First Amendment: Freedom of Speech	5.A Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
3.4 First Amendment: Freedom of the Press	4.D Explain how the visual elements of the source (a cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
3.5 Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms	4.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
3.6 Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety	5.B Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.
3.7 Selective Incorporation	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources
3.8 Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused	5.C Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.
3.9 Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy	1.A Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
3.10 Social Movements and Equal Protection	4.C Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
3.11 Government Responses to Social Movements	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.
3.12 Balancing Minority and Majority Rights	2.C Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.
3.13 Affirmative Action	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

Go to **AP Classroom** to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 3.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

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SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 143 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	3.2	**Graphic Organizer** To practice comparing required Supreme Court cases to a related case, give students a pair of cases—for example, *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) and *Oregon v. Smith* (1990)—and have them use a Venn diagram to come up with similarities and differences between the cases. Guide students to use valid categories for comparison, such as facts, majority opinion, and the reasoning (constitutional question) for the majority opinion.
2	3.3	**Think-Pair-Share** To practice comparing required Supreme Court cases to a related case, give students a pair of cases—for example, *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969) and *Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser* and have them use Think-Pair-Share to come up with similarities, differences, and relevance to political institutions or processes.
3	3.10	**Fishbowl** Ask students to discuss the arguments presented in "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." Have some students form an inner circle to discuss how the arguments relate to political activism and how citizens can affect our government and its policies. The remaining students will form an outer circle to listen, respond, and evaluate.
4	3.11	**Matching Claims and Evidence** Ask small groups of students to write claims and supporting evidence statements based on an argument essay question (such as *Which had more of an impact on the expansion of civil rights: an activist Supreme Court, a motivated legislature, or movements by citizens?*). Have groups trade claims and evidence, revise or modify the claims (if necessary), match the claims and evidence, and write statements explaining why the evidence supports the claim.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

TOPIC 3.1
The Bill of Rights

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 3.1.A Explain how the U.S. Constitution protects individual liberties and rights.	**EK 3.1.A.1** The U.S. Constitution includes a Bill of Rights specifically designed to protect individual liberties and rights. **EK 3.1.A.2** Civil liberties are constitutionally established guarantees and freedoms that protect citizens, opinions, and property against arbitrary government interference. **EK 3.1.A.3** The application of the Bill of Rights is continuously interpreted by the courts.
LO 3.1.B Describe the rights protected in the Bill of Rights.	**EK 3.1.B.1** The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten Amendments to the Constitution, which enumerate the liberties and rights of individuals.

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TOPIC 3.2
First Amendment: Freedom of Religion

SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.A

Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.2.A

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to religious liberty.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.2.A.1

The interpretation and application of the First Amendment's establishment and free exercise clauses reflect an ongoing tension between government power to make law and an individual's right to religious freedom.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.A

Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.

TOPIC 3.3
First Amendment: Freedom of Speech

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943)
- *Morse v. Frederick* (2007)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* **Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 3: SCOTUS Analysis**

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.3.A

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to free speech.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.3.A.1

The Supreme Court has held that speech, including symbolic speech (nonverbal action that communicates an idea or belief), is protected by the First Amendment.

EK 3.3.A.2

Efforts to balance social order and individual freedom are reflected in interpretations of the First Amendment that limit speech, including:

i. Time, place, and manner regulations that impose restrictions such as limits on the time of day an event can be held, limits on where an event can be held, and limits on the noise levels at an event
ii. Limitations on some obscene and offensive communication.
iii. Protections against defamation (language that harms the reputation of another) including libel (written communication) and slander (oral communication).
iv. Restrictions on speech that create a clear and present danger and subsequent interpretations which have refined those restrictions.

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TOPIC 3.4
First Amendment: Freedom of the Press

SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.D

Explain how the visual elements of the source (a cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.4.A

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to individual liberty.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.4.A.1

The Supreme Court bolstered the freedom of the press, affirming support for a heavy presumption against prior restraint even in cases involving national security.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.A

Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.

TOPIC 3.5
Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.5.A

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Second Amendment reflects a commitment to individual liberty.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.5.A.1

The Supreme Court's decisions on the Second Amendment rest upon its constitutional interpretation of the right to bear arms.

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TOPIC 3.6
Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety

SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.B

Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.6.A

Explain how the Supreme Court has attempted to balance claims of individual freedom with laws and enforcement procedures that promote public order and safety.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.6.A.1

Court decisions defining cruel and unusual punishment involve interpretation of the Eighth Amendment and its application to death penalty statutes.

EK 3.6.A.2

The debate about the Second and Fourth Amendments involves concerns about public safety and whether or not the government regulation of firearms or collection of digital metadata promotes or interferes with public safety and individual rights.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.B

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- Bans on polygamy and use of peyote in religious ceremonies

TOPIC 3.7
Selective Incorporation

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 3.7.A Explain the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation.	**EK 3.7.A.1** The doctrine of selective incorporation has imposed limitations on state regulation of civil liberties by extending select protections of the Bill of Rights to the states through the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

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TOPIC 3.8
Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.8.A

Explain the extent to which the government is limited by procedural due process from infringing upon individual rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.8.A.1

The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments include clauses which state that the government may not infringe on a person's right to life, liberty, or property without due process of law. The due process clause in the Fifth Amendment applies to the national government and the due process clause in the Fourteenth Amendment applies to states. Some government interests may justify the restriction of individual rights; for example, speech can be limited when it is shown to present a danger to public safety.

EK 3.8.A.2

Procedural due process requires that government officials use methods that are not arbitrary when making and carrying out decisions affecting constitutionally protected rights. These procedural due process protections are reinforced by key protections enshrined in other provisions of the Bill of Rights and key legal doctrines established by the Supreme Court. For example, the Miranda rule requires accused persons to be informed of some procedural protections found in the Fifth and Sixth Amendments prior to interrogation. However, these procedural protections are not absolute. A public safety exception has been sanctioned by the Court that allows unwarned interrogation to stand as direct evidence in court.

continued on next page

SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.C

Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Riley v. California* (2014)

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.8.A

Explain the extent to which the government is limited by procedural due process from infringing upon individual rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.8.A.3

Procedural rights of the accused and the prohibition of unreasonable searches and seizures are intended to ensure that individual liberties are not eclipsed by the need for social order and security, including:

i. The right to legal counsel, speedy and public trial, and an impartial jury
ii. Protection against warrantless searches of cell phone data under the Fourth Amendment
iii. Limitations placed on bulk collection of telecommunication metadata (Patriot and USA Freedom Acts)

EK 3.8.A.4

Procedural due process also protects the rights of the accused during a trial. The Bill of Rights guarantees the right to an attorney and protection from unreasonable searches and seizures. The exclusionary rule, as decided by the Supreme Court, stipulates that evidence illegally seized by law enforcement officers in violation of the suspect's Fourth Amendment rights (including the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures) cannot be used against that suspect in criminal prosecution.

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TOPIC 3.9
Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.9.A

Explain the extent to which the government is limited by substantive due process from infringing upon individual rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.9.A.1

Over time, the Supreme Court has recognized constitutionally protected rights that are not explicitly listed in the Bill of Rights. These unenumerated rights include the right to privacy. Justices and scholars have drawn on several arguments to defend the existence of unenumerated rights. Some argue that an unenumerated right is implied by certain amendments that assume the existence of such rights. Others argue that the Ninth Amendment, which states that individuals have protected rights beyond those listed in the first eight amendments, provides support for the existence of unenumerated rights.

In a range of cases, the Supreme Court has used substantive due process to examine whether government laws and actions are arbitrary infringements of individual rights.

EK 3.9.A.2

While a right to privacy is not explicitly named in the Constitution, the Supreme Court, in *Griswold* v. *Connecticut* (1965), interpreted the due process clause to protect the right of privacy from government infringement. In *Roe* v. *Wade* (1973), the Supreme Court held that the application of substantive due process further extended the privacy right to abortion. The Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs* v. *Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) overturned Roe v. Wade, holding that the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion, leaving decisions about the regulation of abortion to legislatures. The actions that are protected by the right to privacy and substantive due process continue to be debated.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.A

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925)
- Hyde Amendment of 1976 barred the use of certain federal funds to pay for abortions outside of incest, rape, or endangerment to the life of the pregnant woman
- *Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County v. Earls* (2008)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.C

Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Equal treatment in public accommodations (Title II), equal employment opportunities (Title VII), and opportunities for women to participate in athletics (Title IX)
- *Reed v. Reed* (1971)
- Hatch Amendment (proposed 1981)

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* **Analytical Reading ("Letter from a Birmingham Jail")**

TOPIC 3.10
Social Movements and Equal Protection

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.10.A

Explain how constitutional provisions have supported and motivated social movements.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.10.A.1

Civil rights protect individuals from discrimination based on characteristics such as race, national origin, religion, and sex; these rights are guaranteed to all persons under the due process and equal protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution, as well as acts of Congress.

EK 3.10.A.2

The civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, and advocacy for LGBTQ rights are evidence of how the equal protection clause can support and motivate social movements, as represented by:

i. Dr. Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and the civil rights movement of the 1960s
ii. The National Organization for Women and the women's rights movement
iii. The pro-life and pro-choice movements

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TOPIC 3.11
Government Responses to Social Movements

SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.B

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.11.A

Explain how the government has responded to social movements.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.11.A.1

The government can respond to social movements through court rulings and/or policies.

i. Supreme Court decisions which declared that race-based school segregation violates the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause.
ii. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in public places, provides for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and makes employment discrimination illegal.
iii. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
iv. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits racial discrimination in voting.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.C

Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.

TOPIC 3.12
Balancing Minority and Majority Rights

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.12.A

Explain how the government has at times allowed the restriction of the civil rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.12.A.1

Decisions demonstrating that minority rights have been restricted at times and protected at other times include:

i. The Emancipation Proclamation freed enslaved people from the states in rebellion against the United States, and the subsequent ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment permanently abolished slavery and marked a shift toward the establishment of civil rights for the formerly enslaved
ii. State laws and Supreme Court holdings based on the "separate but equal" doctrine restricting African American access to the same restaurants, hotels, schools, etc., as the majority white population
iii. Court decisions declaring that race-based school segregation violates the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause
iv. The Supreme Court upholding the rights of the majority in cases that limit and prohibit majority-minority districting

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TOPIC 3.13
Affirmative Action

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.13.A

Describe Supreme Court debates about affirmative action policies.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.13.A.1

Affirmative action refers to policies intended to address workplace and educational disparities related to race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, and age. Supreme Court debate has focused on whether affirmative action is protected by the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974)
- *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007)
- *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978)
- *Gratz v. Bollinger and Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003)

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

UNIT 4

American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

10–15%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING

~22/~11
CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to **AP Classroom** to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 4

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions
Free-response: 3 questions

- Concept Application
- Quantitative Analysis
- Quantitative Analysis

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UNIT 4

10–15% AP EXAM WEIGHTING | ~22/~11 CLASS PERIODS

American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

BIG IDEA 4
Competing Policymaking Interests

- How do our core beliefs about the role of government affect our behavior?
- How does our view of what freedom is shape our opinions?

BIG IDEA 5
Methods of Political Analysis

- Why are some opinion polls better than others?
- How can policymakers use information from political science to make decisions?

Developing Understanding

Connecting the application of political science methods to the development of social and economic policies that Americans support, advocate for, and adopt is foundational to understanding the ideologies of political parties and patterns of political participation. American political beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, linkage institutions (i.e., elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media in all its forms), and the changing demographics of citizens. These beliefs about government, politics, and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of public policies.

Building the Course Skills

3.C 3.D 4.C

This unit provides a great opportunity to integrate data analysis with an investigation of American attitudes about government and politics, how those attitudes develop and change over time, and how political scientists measure and evaluate political attitudes and behaviors. Students should be able to correctly interpret and connect what they see in the data to course concepts in order to draw conclusions. Drawing conclusions requires students to make inferences based on the patterns and trends in the data and their knowledge of political concepts.

This is also a good time to have students analyze political concepts from secondary sources and explain how they relate to a political concept. Books by political scientists, opinion pieces in major publications, and scholarly online articles will often connect to current events and be a great resource. Students should analyze the argument, considering how the author responds to opposing or differing perspectives.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The AP Exam requires students to analyze quantitative data presented visually and apply that analysis to their understanding of political concepts in both the multiple-choice and free-response sections.

In both types of questions, students will need to be able to: (1) identify and describe the data, (2) describe patterns or trends in data, (3) draw conclusions about patterns or trends in data, and (4) explain how the data relates or demonstrates a political concept, principle, or behavior.

Students often struggle to connect conclusions drawn from data to political concepts, such as behavior. Encourage them to take their conclusions further and explain the relationship. Political scientists use data and their knowledge of political institutions and processes to explain how, for example, members of a political party, voters, or interest groups may react to certain public opinion data.

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UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
4.1 American Attitudes About Government and Politics	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
4.2 Political Socialization	3.A Describe the data presented.
4.3 Changes in Ideology	3.B Describe patterns and trends in data.
4.4 Influence of Political Events on Ideology	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
4.5 Measuring Public Opinion	3.C Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.
4.6 Evaluating Public Opinion Data	3.D Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
4.7 Ideologies of Political Parties	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
4.8 Ideology and Policymaking	4.D Explain how the visual elements of the source (a cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
4.9 Ideology and Economic Policy	3.E Explain possible limitations of the data provided.
4.10 Ideology and Social Policy	4.C Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

Go to **AP Classroom** to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 4.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

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SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	4.1	**Close Read** Have students read an excerpt from a secondary political source, such as a news article or a book by a political theorist, that is related to political socialization. Ideas can be found in the optional readings on the topic pages. Have students identify the writer's argument and the evidence used to support that argument, and relate the argument to a political behavior.
2	4.2	**Discussion Group** Assign students to groups to discuss the learning objective from this topic—*Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization*—with the view to help them develop new understandings by hearing the views of their classmates. After discussion, ask groups to present their conclusions on the factors and whether or not their group reached a consensus.
3	4.5	**Create Representation** Give groups of students data from a few current public opinion polls and ask the groups to create a visual representation of the data. Let students decide the best type of visual (graph, table, etc.) to use and make sure they correctly label the visual. To ensure understanding, have groups trade with each other and review the graphs.
4	4.6 and 4.8	**Guided Discussion** This topic offers a lot of fodder for discussion about how political actors use polling data. You can use brainstorming and quickwrite as strategies during a guided discussion in which you help students understand fiscal policy polling data and how the data may affect political behavior.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- Alexis de Tocqueville's "The Origin of the Anglo-Americans" and "Social Condition of the Anglo-Americans," Chapters 2 and 3 of *Democracy in America* (1835)
- Suzanne Mettler's *Confronting the Submerged State* (2011)
- George Will's *Statecraft as Soulcraft: What Government Does* (1983)

TOPIC 4.1
American Attitudes About Government and Politics

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.1.A

Explain the relationship between core values of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.1.A.1

Different interpretations of core values affect the relationship between citizens, as well as between citizens and the federal government. Some of these core values include:

i. Individualism (each person has the ability to shape their life and destiny through the choices they make)
ii. Equality of opportunity (all people are given an equal chance to compete)
iii. Free enterprise (pursuit of self-interest, competition, efficient allocation of resources, and limited government regulation of the market, as espoused by Adam Smith in writings such as *The Wealth of Nations*)
iv. Rule of law (every person, even those in power, must follow and is accountable to the same laws that govern all)

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TOPIC 4.2
Political Socialization

SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.A

Describe the data presented.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.2.A

Explain how cultural factors influence political socialization.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.2.A.1

Political socialization refers to the process by which individuals develop political beliefs, values, opinions, and behaviors. Family, schools, peers, media, and social environments (including civic and religious organizations) contribute to the development of an individual's political attitudes and values through the process of political socialization.

EK 4.2.A.2

U.S. political culture is defined by its democratic ideals, principles, and core values. As a result of globalization, U.S. political culture has both influenced and been influenced by the values of other countries.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* (1995)
- Participating in Scouts or serving on a school board
- Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat 3.0* (2007) or Joseph Stiglitz's *Making Globalization Work* (2006)
- Matt Barreto and Gary Segura's *Latino America: How America's Most Dynamic Population Is Poised to Transform the Politics of the Nation* (2014)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.B

Describe patterns and trends in data.

OPTIONAL READING

- Cathy J. Cohen's *Democracy Remixed: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics* (2010)

TOPIC 4.3
Changes in Ideology

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.3.A

Explain how social factors impact political ideology.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.3.A.1

Generational effects (experiences shared by people of a common age) and life cycle effects (experiences a person encounters during different life stages) contribute to the development of a person's political ideology.

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TOPIC 4.4
Influence of Political Events on Ideology

SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.4.A

Explain how major political events influence political ideology.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.4.A.1

Major political events can influence the development of individual political attitudes, which is an example of political socialization. Political socialization, in turn, influences political ideology.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.C

Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* Data Analysis (Measuring Public Opinion Data)

TOPIC 4.5
Measuring Public Opinion

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.5.A

Describe the elements of a scientific poll.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.5.A.1

Public opinion data that can affect elections and policy debates is influenced by different types of scientific polls such as:

i. Opinion polls (measuring public opinion on various issues)
ii. Benchmark polls (creating baseline views of a candidate)
iii. Tracking polls (following how views of a candidate change during a campaign)
iv. Exit polls (collecting data on why people voted the way they did)

EK 4.5.A.2

Public opinion data that can affect elections and policy debates is influenced by polling methodology. Polling methodology is more precise when it includes:

i. Accurate sampling methods, including calculating a margin of error
ii. Neutral framing of questions (specific and unbiased wording of questions)
iii. Accurate reporting (clear reporting and conclusions that can be supported by the data)

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TOPIC 4.6
Evaluating Public Opinion Data

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.6.A

Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.6.A.1

The relationship between scientific polling and elections and policy debates is affected by the:

i. Importance of public opinion as a source of political influence in a given election or policy debate

ii. Reliability and veracity of public opinion data

SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.D

Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Carter–Reagan election of 1980
- Obama–Romney election of 2012
- Clinton–Trump election of 2016

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

TOPIC 4.7
Ideologies of Political Parties

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.7.A

Explain how ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.7.A.1

The Democratic Party (D or DEM) platforms generally align more closely to liberal ideological positions, and the Republican Party (R or GOP) platforms generally align more closely to conservative ideological positions.

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TOPIC 4.8
Ideology and Policymaking

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.8.A

Explain how U.S. political culture (e.g., democratic ideals, principles, and core values) influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.8.A.1

Because the U.S. is a democracy with a diverse society, public policies generated at any given time reflect the attitudes and beliefs of citizens who choose to participate in politics at that time.

EK 4.8.A.2

The balancing dynamic of individual liberty and government efforts to promote stability and order has been reflected in policy debates and their outcomes over time.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.D

Explain how the visual elements of the source (a cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Seymour Martin Lipset's "Ideology, Politics, and Deviance," Chapter 1 of *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (1996)
- Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996
- DREAM Act and debate over making English the official national language
- Multiculturalism versus assimilation

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.E

Explain possible limitations of the data provided.

TOPIC 4.9
Ideology and Economic Policy

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Ideological positions on the inheritance tax
- Ideological positions on the minimum wage

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* **Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 4: Data Analysis**

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 4.9.A Explain how different political ideologies affect the role of government in regulating the marketplace.	**EK 4.9.A.1** Liberal ideologies favor more governmental regulation of the marketplace, conservative ideologies favor fewer regulations, and libertarian ideologies favor little or no regulation of the marketplace beyond the protection of property rights and voluntary trade.
LO 4.9.B Explain how fiscal and monetary policy actions influence economic conditions.	**EK 4.9.B.1** Fiscal policy consists of actions taken by Congress and the president to influence economic conditions and includes Keynesian and supply-side positions. **EK 4.9.B.2** Monetary policy consists of actions taken by the Federal Reserve (the Fed) to influence interest rates which affect broader economic conditions. The Fed is an independent agency which seeks to achieve maximum employment and price stability.

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TOPIC 4.10
Ideology and Social Policy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 4.10.A Explain how political ideologies vary on the role of the government in addressing social issues.	**EK 4.10.A.1** Liberal ideologies generally favor more national government involvement to address some social issues such as education and public health, with less responsibility for these issues left to state governments. **EK 4.10.A.2** Conservative ideologies generally favor less national government involvement to address some social issues such as education and public health, with more responsibility for these issues left to state governments. **EK 4.10.A.3** Libertarian ideologies generally favor little national or state government involvement except when national or state government is protecting private property or individual liberty.
LO 4.10.B Explain how different ideologies affect policy on social issues.	**EK 4.10.B.1** Policy trends concerning the level of government involvement in social issues reflect the success of conservative or liberal perspectives in political parties.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.C

Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992)
- Ideological positions on school vouchers litigated in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002)
- Differing state requirements for marriage and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) ruling on same-sex marriage

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

UNIT 5

Political Participation

20–27%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING

~18/~9
CLASS PERIODS

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Remember to go to **AP Classroom** to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 5

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions
Free-response: 3 questions

- Quantitative Analysis
- Argument Essay
- Argument Essay

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UNIT 5

20–27% AP EXAM WEIGHTING | **~18/~9** CLASS PERIODS

Political Participation

BIG IDEA 3
Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy
- Why do some people choose to participate in government while others do not?
- How does your social network affect your political beliefs?

BIG IDEA 4
Competing Policymaking Interests
- Why might you join a political party? Why might you choose not to?

BIG IDEA 5
Methods of Political Analysis
- How does who you are affect whether you participate or not?

Developing Understanding

Students should understand the many ways that they can influence policymakers and impact the decisions that will affect their daily lives.

The principle of rule by the people is the bedrock of the American political system and requires that citizens engage and participate in the development of policy. Under our Constitution, governing is achieved directly through citizen participation, although there are institutions (e.g., political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policymaking.

Building the Course Skills

3.D 5.A 5.B 5.C 5.D

Throughout the course, students have been gradually introduced to argumentation and have had regular opportunities to practice this skill. In this unit, students continue to write defensible claims, support claims with relevant evidence, and establish a line of reasoning, but now also use rebuttal or refutation when they respond to alternative perspectives.

Just as political scientists do in their arguments, students should be able to identify an opposing or alternate perspective about a political principle, institution, process, or behavior and use evidence to explain why that perspective is not as valid or credible as their own claim.

As students build toward more complex skills, it helps to ask them to identify and explain limitations they discover when analyzing and interpreting quantitative data. Limitations can include data from a limited demographic, opt-in polling (like on social media), a biased polling source, the way questions were asked, and more.

Preparing for the AP Exam

To complete their argument essays, students will respond to an opposing or alternative perspective. It is not enough for students to simply identify an opposing or alternative perspective. They must demonstrate a correct understanding of the perspective by briefly describing it, and then rebut or refute that perspective.

This task is often difficult for students. Many students can identify an opposing or alternative perspective, but they struggle to explain why the other perspective is incorrect or why another perspective might be equally as valid as their own argument. To help students master this skill, ask them to identify evidence that would support an alternative perspective when establishing their own claims. Then, have them explain why, in the face of this evidence, they still chose to support a different claim. This thought process shows students one way of effectively rebutting or refuting an alternative perspective. Key phrases such as "while some may argue" or "even though some evidence supports" can help them frame their counterarguments.

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UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skills
5.1 Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
5.2 Voter Turnout	3.C Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.
5.3 Political Parties	1.B Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
5.4 How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
5.5 Third-Party Politics	3.D Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
5.6 Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking	3.F Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.
5.7 Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
5.8 Electing a President	5.A Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
5.9 Congressional Elections	5.B Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.
5.10 Modern Campaigns	5.C Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.
5.11 Campaign Finance	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.
5.12 The Media	5.D Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation.
5.13 Changing Media	2.D Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a relevant political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.

Go to **AP Classroom** to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 5.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

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SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	5.2	**Look for a Pattern** Using a complex graph with at least two data sets—for example, showing voting patterns by age and gender—have students compare the data to find a trend and draw a conclusion. They should also explain their reasoning. For example, a graph may show that less than 40 percent of people under the age of 24 vote, but over 70 percent of people aged 65–74 vote. Students could conclude that candidates are unlikely to champion issues favored mostly by the young because young people are not as likely to vote as older people.
2	5.7	**Debate** Facilitate a debate about the various groups that influence policy in our government today. Ask students to take a position on which group they believe has the most influence and to provide relevant supporting evidence to back up their claims.
3	5.13	**Self/Peer Revision** Ask students to write an argument based on the following prompt: *Which of the following factions have the most impact on national elections today: political parties, special interest groups, or the media?* Ask students to use evidence from *Federalist No. 10* to support their claims. Have students perform self- and peer revisions of their practice argument essays so they have the opportunity to review their practice claims, supporting evidence, sourcing, and analysis and reasoning.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

TOPIC 5.1
Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 5.1.A Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation.	**EK 5.1.A.1** Expansion of opportunities for political participation are found in the legal protections of the Amendments to the Constitution. i. The 14th Amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the U.S., including formerly enslaved people. ii. The 15th Amendment granted African American men the right to vote. iii. The 17th Amendment changed the practice for electing Senators from a vote by state legislatures to a direct vote by the people. iv. The 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote. v. The 24th Amendment eliminated poll taxes, a structural barrier to voting. vi. The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18.
LO 5.1.B Describe different models of voting behavior.	**EK 5.1.B.1** Various political models explain differences in voting behavior. i. Rational choice voting refers to individuals who base their decisions on what is perceived to be in their best interest. ii. Retrospective voting refers to individuals who decide whether the party or candidate in power should be reelected based on the recent past.

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LO 5.1.B

Describe different models of voting behavior.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

iii. Prospective voting refers to individuals who vote based on predictions of how a party or candidate will perform in the future.

iv. Straight ticket voting refers to individuals who vote for all of the candidates from one political party on a ballot.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.C

Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- Rob Paral's "Stepping Up: The Impact of the Newest Immigrant, Asian, and Latino Voters," Immigration Policy Center (2013)
- "The Diversifying Electorate—Voting Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2012 (and Other Recent Elections)," U.S. Census Bureau (May 2013)
- David RePass's "Issue Salience and Party Choice," *American Political Science Review* (1971)

TOPIC 5.2
Voter Turnout

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.2.A

Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.2.A.1

Structural barriers (such as polling hours, availability of absentee ballots, etc.), political efficacy (the belief that an individual's participation in the political process will make a difference), and demographics can influence differences in voter turnout in the U.S.

EK 5.2.A.2

The following can influence voter turnout:

i. Differences in state-controlled elections (the hours polls are open, Voter ID laws, variations in funding for polling places and workers, variations in types of voting allowed, such as voting by mail, absentee voting, and early voting)
ii. Variations in voter registration laws and procedures (registering in-person, online, or automatically)
iii. Election type (more turnout for presidential elections than midterm elections)

EK 5.2.A.3

Demographic characteristics and political efficacy or engagement are used to predict the likelihood of whether an individual will vote.

EK 5.2.A.4

Factors influencing voter choice include:

i. Party identification and ideological orientation
ii. Candidate characteristics
iii. Contemporary political issues
iv. Religious beliefs or affiliation, age, gender, race and ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics

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TOPIC 5.3
Political Parties

SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.B

Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- 2012 Democratic and Republican party platforms

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 5.3.A Describe linkage institutions.	**EK 5.3.A.1** Linkage institutions are channels that allow individuals to communicate their preferences to policymakers: i. Political parties ii. Interest groups iii. Elections iv. Media
LO 5.3.B Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and government	**EK 5.3.B.1** The functions and impact of political parties on the electorate and government are represented by: i. Mobilization and education of voters ii. Party platforms iii. Candidate recruitment iv. Campaign management, including fundraising and media strategy v. The committee and party leadership systems in legislatures

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- Mitt Romney's ORCA and Barack Obama's Project Narwhal in the 2012 campaign

TOPIC 5.4

How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.4.A

Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.4.A.1

Parties have adapted to candidate-centered campaigns where the public focus is on the characteristics of the candidate and not on the party. The role of parties in nominating candidates has also been weakened.

EK 5.4.A.2

Parties may adapt their policies and messaging to appeal to various demographic coalitions.

EK 5.4.A.3

The structure of parties has been influenced by:

i. Critical elections (elections in which there is a realignment of political party support among voters)
ii. Campaign finance law
iii. Changes in communication and data management technology

EK 5.4.A.4

Parties use communication technology and voter data management to disseminate, control, and clarify political messages and enhance outreach and mobilization efforts.

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TOPIC 5.5
Third-Party Politics

SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.D

Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.5.A

Explain how structural barriers affect third-party and independent candidate success.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.5.A.1

In comparison to proportional systems, winner-take-all voting districts serve as a structural barrier to third-party and independent candidate success. Winner-take-all voting advantages the two-party system in the U.S.

EK 5.5.A.2

The incorporation of third-party agendas into platforms of major political parties serves as a barrier to third-party and independent candidate success.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Data Analysis

3.F

Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.

OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Tobacco subsidies
- Tax cuts under George W. Bush
- Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (1965)
- E. E. Schattschneider's *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (1960)

TOPIC 5.6
Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 5.6.A Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest group influence on elections and policymaking.	**EK 5.6.A.1** Interest groups may represent very specific or more general interests, and can educate voters and office holders, conduct lobbying, draft legislation, and mobilize membership to apply pressure on and work with legislators and government agencies. Interest groups may also file an amicus curiae brief (a written document submitted as a "friend of the court" to provide additional information for justices to consider when reviewing a case). **EK 5.6.A.2** In addition to working within party coalitions, interest groups exert influence through iron triangles and issue networks that help interest groups exert influence across political party coalitions.
LO 5.6.B Explain how variation in types of interest groups and the resources interest groups possess affects their ability to influence elections and policymaking.	**EK 5.6.B.1** The inequality of interest group resources affects the amount of influence they may have on the policymaking process. i. Some interest groups, such as AARP, have large memberships, are able to mobilize those members, and possess access to large financial reserves. ii. Some interest groups have more direct and more frequent access to important people in the policy process.

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LO 5.6.B

Explain how variation in types of interest groups and the resources interest groups possess affects their ability to influence elections and policymaking.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

iii. Free riders are individuals who benefit from the work of an interest group without providing financial support. Interest groups may deal with this issue by providing selective benefits, goods and services that are only available to members, to encourage more people to join.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Concept Application

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- Club for Growth supporting limits on taxation

TOPIC 5.7
Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.7.A

Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.7.A.1

Single-issue groups, ideological/social movements, and protest movements form with the goal of affecting society and policymaking.

EK 5.7.A.2

Competing actors such as interest groups, professional organizations, social movements, the military, and bureaucratic agencies influence policymaking, such as the federal budget process, at key stages and to varying degrees.

EK 5.7.A.3

Elections and political parties are related to major policy shifts or initiatives, occasionally leading to political realignments of voting constituencies.

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TOPIC 5.8
Electing a President

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 5.8.A Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election.	**EK 5.8.A.1** The process and outcomes in U.S. presidential elections are affected by: i. Incumbency advantage phenomenon (benefits current officeholders possess over challengers) ii. Open and closed primaries (voting processes to elect candidates) iii. Caucuses (closed meetings of party members to select candidates or decide policy) iv. Party conventions v. General (presidential) elections vi. The Electoral College
LO 5.8.B Explain how the Electoral College affects U.S. presidential elections.	**EK 5.8.B.1** States can choose how they allocate their electors; most states use a winner-take-all system. Because the results of the Electoral College vote may not be the same as the popular vote nationwide, there is an ongoing debate over the Electoral College.

SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.A

Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- 2000 presidential election

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.*
  Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 5: Argumentation

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SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.B

Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- *You can find related resources below in AP Classroom.* **Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 5: Argumentation**

TOPIC 5.9
Congressional Elections

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.9.A

Explain how the different processes work in U.S. congressional elections.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.9.A.1

The process and outcomes in U.S. congressional elections are affected by:

i. Incumbency advantage phenomenon
ii. Open and closed primaries
iii. Caucuses
iv. General (presidential and midterm) elections.

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TOPIC 5.10
Modern Campaigns

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.10.A

Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.10.A.1

The benefits and drawbacks of modern campaigns are represented by:

i. Dependence on professional consultants
ii. Rising campaign costs and intensive fundraising efforts
iii. Duration of election cycles
iv. Impact of and reliance on social media for campaign communication and fundraising

SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.C

Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.

OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Canvasing and phone banking
- Sasha Issenberg's *Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* (2012)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Application

2.B

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.

TOPIC 5.11
Campaign Finance

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.11.A

Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.11.A.1

Federal legislation and case law pertaining to campaign finance demonstrate the ongoing debate over the role of money in political and free speech, as set forth in:

i. The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, which was an effort to ban soft money and reduce attack ads with "Stand by Your Ad" provision: "I'm [candidate's name] and I approve this message"
ii. Supreme Court decisions that ruled political spending by corporations, associations, and labor unions is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment

EK 5.11.A.2

Debates have increased over free speech and competitive and fair elections related to money and campaign funding (including contributions from individuals, political action committees [PACs], and political parties).

EK 5.11.A.3

Different types of PACs influence elections and policymaking through fundraising and spending.

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TOPIC 5.12
The Media

SUGGESTED SKILL

Argumentation

5.D

Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation.

OPTIONAL READINGS

- FiveThirtyEight.com blog by Nate Silver
- "Understanding the Participatory News Consumer," A Pew Trust Report (March 1, 2010)

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.12.A

Explain the media's role as a linkage institution.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.12.A.1

Agenda setting takes place when traditional news media, new communication technologies, and advances in social media influence how citizens routinely acquire political information, including news events, investigative journalism, election coverage, and political commentary.

EK 5.12.A.2

The media's use of polling results to convey popular levels of trust and confidence in government can affect elections by turning such events into "horse races" based more on popularity and factors other than qualifications and platforms of candidates.

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SUGGESTED SKILL

SCOTUS Analysis

2.D

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a relevant political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.

OPTIONAL READING

- Malcolm Gladwell's "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," *The New Yorker* (Oct. 4, 2010)

TOPIC 5.13
Changing Media

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.13.A

Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.13.A.1

Political participation is influenced by a variety of media coverage, analysis, and commentary on political events.

EK 5.13.A.2

The rapidly increasing demand for media and political communications outlets from an ideologically diverse audience have led to debates over media bias and the impact of media ownership and partisan news sites.

EK 5.13.A.3

The nature of democratic debate and the level of political knowledge among citizens is affected by:

i. Increased media choices
ii. Ideologically oriented programming
iii. Consumer-driven media outlets and emerging technologies that reinforce existing beliefs
iv. Uncertainty over the credibility of news sources and information

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Project Guide

Making the Civic Connection

To be authorized as an AP U.S. Government and Politics course, teachers must submit a course syllabus for review that complies with the following:

Curricular Requirement 10. Students are provided with an opportunity to engage in a political science research or applied civics project tied to the AP Course and Exam Description that culminates in a presentation of findings. (See **AP U.S. Government and Politics Course Audit Curricular Requirements** on AP Central.)

The project can involve student participation in nonpartisan service-learning opportunities, government-based internship programs, or a choice from a teacher-approved list of research project ideas.

While the project is not part of the AP Exam grade, it does provide students with the opportunity to engage in a sustained, real-world activity that will deepen their understanding of course content and help them develop the course skills that are assessed on the exam.

Project Guidelines

A relevant project applies course concepts to real-world political issues, processes, institutions, and policymaking. For example, students might investigate a question by collecting and analyzing data; participate in a relevant service learning or civic event; or develop a sustained, applied investigation about local issues. Students would then communicate their findings or experiences in a way that conveys or demonstrates their understanding of course content.

You have flexibility in how to set up, connect, and assess student performance on the project. The following are important considerations.

The project must require students to:

- Connect course concepts to real-world issues
- Demonstrate course skills
- Share/communicate their findings in an authentic way (e.g., presentation, article, speech, brochure, multimedia, podcast, political science fair)

The project may be:

- Undertaken either by individuals or small groups of students
- Completed before or after the AP Exam or integrated throughout or at a specific point in the course
- Partisan based, if so chosen by the student(s)

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You should:

- Ensure that the project complies with local school/district guidelines and policies
- Consider the length of the course (half year versus full year) when determining the complexity of the project
- Ensure that projects are appropriate for:
  - the age and maturity of the student
  - the availability of resources and necessary transportation
  - the political climate in your community
- Assist students in choosing project topics and determining scope
- Provide feedback to students about conceptual understanding and skill development

You should not:

- Assign students to partisan-based projects; while allowed, such projects must be of the student's own choosing

GUIDING STUDENTS IN SELECTING REASONABLE POLITICAL ISSUES OR FIELDS OF INQUIRY

The key to a successful project is choosing an appropriate issue or inquiry, which may be difficult for students. You may want to prepare a list of ideas for student research. Because students will be sharing their work in some capacity, each student or group should work on a different issue or inquiry.

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course framework is packed with content that can generate project or topic ideas. Additionally, the required foundational documents or Supreme Court cases might spark interest and provide context for a project.

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Project Suggestions

The following pages present potential project ideas that can be conducted by either individuals or groups as appropriate. The projects in this list illustrate a range of complexity and length. Please note that some of the more complex and extensive projects will offer the greatest opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of course concepts and develop course skills.

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PROJECT SUGGESTIONS

Project Description	Presentation	Resources
Develop a Position *Research a local, state, or national issue related to a political principle. Propose potential options or alternatives. Develop an argument that describes the intended outcome of the option, explains how it would be implemented, and refutes opposing arguments.*	Develop a display board to present the issue, options, and proposals that will be shared in a class, school, or community political science fair. **OR** Write a letter or letters to elected officials explaining your position and proposal.	Sample Letter to Elected Officials from the American Library Association Sample letter and other resources from the North Los Angeles Regional Center Writing Effective Letters to Your Legislators from the National Court Reporters Association Videos with tips for civic engagement on Citizen University
Analyze Public Opinion *Develop and implement a survey about a political topic or policy. Analyze the data and make a policy recommendation. Discuss the possible impact of the policy if implemented.*	Develop a visual display of the data and present findings and recommendations to an appropriate group, organization, or institution (e.g., school board) as a podcast, video, letter, or other authentic format.	Survey creation tools on Google Forms or Typeform Polling analysis and data from the Pew Research Center Maps, population statistics, and other data from the U.S. Census Bureau
Media Literacy Project *Select a political issue and research how that issue is being framed and reported on in multiple media outlets. Use this investigation to develop a framework for discerning false, misleading, or biased information, including determining criteria for what makes a source credible.*	Create a guide to media literacy for peers, using your findings on how one story is covered by various outlets to make recommendations about savvy media use.	Web literacy resources from November Learning Media literacy resources from the Newseum, Media Literacy Now, or PBS NewsHour websites Tips on Writing a Good Letter to the Editor from the National Council of Teachers of English

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PROJECT SUGGESTIONS *(cont'd)*

Project Description	Presentation	Resources
Local Civic Engagement *Identify and research an issue of current debate. Attend a school board, city council, or local government meeting related to that issue. Observe and document policymaking processes and outcomes.* **OR** *Set up a class or school forum where policy-makers or advocates with differing perspectives have the opportunity to discuss and debate the issue. Document the differing perspectives and implications.*	Present your own perspective during a public comment period during a public meeting. Write a letter to the editor for the school or local paper, blog, or online forum relating your argument or perspective.	Tips for Speaking at a Town or Public Meeting from the American Public Health Association
Legislator Lobby Day *After thoroughly researching a policy issue, meet with local legislators to discuss the issue.*	Develop a list of evidence-based talking points and leave behind a document for use when meeting with elected officials. **OR** Develop a brochure for community members that explains the issue.	How to organize a lobby day on the Classroom to Capitol website
Campaign Consultants *During an election season, research important issues, voter perspectives, and policies impacting a particular elected position. Assume the role of campaign consultant(s) who must advise candidates currently running for office.*	Create a mock campaign proposal and then be interviewed by the teacher or classmates. The campaign proposal should illustrate the candidate's strategy based on data and might include key messaging, storyboards, scripts, visual imagery, videos, and/or posters for the candidate.	Tips for creating online campaigns on Facebook and Crowdpac 7 Ways to Effectively Market Your Candidate from Campaigns and Elections

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PROJECT SUGGESTIONS *(cont'd)*

Project Description	Presentation	Resources
Mock Congress *Conduct a mock Congress. Students assume the roles of members of Congress seeking to enact a legislative agenda. They research an issue, write a draft of a bill, and write a floor speech to introduce the proposed legislation. Other students assume the roles of other legislators and engage in a congressional debate.* *Note: This activity may be part of a larger statewide or national competition or event.*	Deliver the floor speech proposing the legislation and provide evidence-based answers to questions posed about the bill.	We the People mock Congress national finals on YouTube My E-Congress User's Guide from the Youth Leadership Initiative The New York State YMCA Youth and Government program
Citizen Action Campaign *Design a citizen action campaign to increase awareness about a policy issue or to increase civic participation.* *Investigate the issue and an advocacy group that engages with that issue or action.*	Develop a policy memo detailing the issue, the position of the campaign, and strategies for enacting the policy. Include which governmental institutions or bodies would be most likely to create policy change. **OR** Create a blog or public service announcement (e.g., YouTube video or radio commercial) to inform or persuade others.	Policy Memo Writing Tips from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs How to design an infographic on Piktochart How to Create the Perfect Public Service Announcement from the Center for Digital Education Strategies for civic engagement such as The Future of Civic Engagement from the National League of Cities or Rock the Vote

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PROJECT SUGGESTIONS *(cont'd)*

Project Description	Presentation	Resources
Service Learning *Design and participate in a community service project that relates to and builds deeper understanding of a course concept.*	Write and publish an article (e.g., for a newspaper, blog, magazine, school website) that describes the service project and its relevance to a course concept.	Incorporating Service Learning into All AP Courses on AP Central Introducing AP with WE Service on WE Service-Learning Toolkit from the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships at the University of South Florida
Government in My Community *Collect and annotate articles from local sources (e.g., newspapers, magazines, websites) about government actions in the community.*	Compile a portfolio of the articles with analyses of the implications and impact of the governmental actions and outcomes.	Using Technology: Electronic Portfolios in the K–12 Classroom from Education World

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Instructional Approaches

Selecting and Using Course Materials

Using a wide array of source material helps students become proficient with the course skills and develop a conceptual understanding of the U.S. government and its interactions. In addition to using a college-level textbook that will provide required course content, students should have regular opportunities to examine primary and secondary source material in different and varied forms, as well as other types of political science scholarship. Rich, diverse source material provides more flexibility in designing learning activities that develop the habits of thinking like a political scientist that are essential for student success in the course.

Textbooks

The AP U.S. Government and Poltics course requires the use of a college-level textbook. Also, because the course skills are fundamental to the course, a textbook that focuses on skill instruction is useful.

While nearly all college-level U.S. government textbooks address the five units of the AP U.S. Government and Politics course, they do not always do so in a balanced fashion. In that case, it will be important for teachers to identify other types of secondary sources and supplement the textbook accordingly to ensure that each of the five topic areas receives adequate attention. Some textbooks review historical contexts of events such as the constitutional debates or various civil rights movements. Since this is a political science course rather than a history course, teachers should focus on how those debates or movements shaped or relate to our present-day government. Ultimately, it is best to select a textbook that closely aligns with the course framework and the course skills.

While teachers select textbooks locally, an **example textbook list** of college-level textbooks that meet the AP Course Audit resource requirements is found on AP Central.

Supreme Court Cases

AP U.S. Government and Politics students should be familiar with the structure and functions of the Supreme Court of the United States as well as how the court renders its decisions. This includes knowing how holdings are decided and that justices who are in the minority often write dissents that express their opinions on the case and the constitutional questions. While students will not need to know any dissenting (or concurring) opinions from the required cases, it is important for students to understand the role of dissenting opinions, especially as they relate to future cases on similar issues.

The course framework requires the analysis of required Supreme Court cases.

For the required Supreme Court cases, students should know the major details of each case, the holding in the majority opinion, and the constitutional principle used by the majority of justices to support their finding. On the AP Exam, students will need to apply this information to a real-world scenario or in comparison to another case.

There are key elements for students to understand about these Supreme Court cases: the facts, the issue, the holding, and the reasoning behind the decisions.

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Text-Based Qualitative Sources (Primary and Secondary Sources)

Political science writing differs from writing in other fields. It focuses on what influences political behavior and attitudes (e.g., voting, party identification, candidate support) and how political ideas and policies are developed and implemented.

Students in this AP course are required to analyze primary and secondary source material, including arguments written by political scientists and others, in order to deepen their understanding of the key concepts addressed by the textbook and to engage in the required course skills. Students are *not* expected to conduct original research, but they should be introduced to scholarly political science research articles.

FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course features nine required foundational documents to help students understand the philosophies of the founders and their critics, and how discussions about ways to implement those philosophies have shaped the government.

These documents are:

- The Declaration of Independence
- The Articles of Confederation
- *Federalist No. 10*
- *Brutus No. 1*
- *Federalist No. 51*
- The Constitution of the United States
- *Federalist No. 70*
- *Federalist No. 78*
- "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Most of these documents were written in the late 18th century and contain some high-level language. It is important for students to be able to read and accurately interpret these documents.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Student success in the course also depends on exposure to and analysis of multiple secondary sources in which political scientists present and explain their arguments. The most common secondary sources students should encounter include editorials, journal articles, news media articles, Supreme Court case analyses, and essays and books by political scientists. The course framework includes suggested supplemental readings for many of the essential knowledge statements, but the choice of which secondary texts to use is entirely up to you. Choose a variety of sources that represent different points of view and that will engage students while enhancing learning. Select high-interest readings and add new articles to keep up with rapidly changing events.

Quantitative Sources

Political science courses require students to engage with data in a variety of ways. The analysis, interpretation, and application of quantitative information are vital skills for students in AP U.S. Government and Politics. New textbooks and publishers' resources often contain quantitative information presented via charts, graphs, or other infographics, but that data may soon become out of date. Research institutions such as the Pew Research Center are good resources for current data to practice quantitative skills with students.

Visual Sources

Students will encounter a variety of visual sources on the AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam. Some visuals contain data, such as a map showing Electoral College results. Other visuals may illustrate political principles, processes, or behaviors, such as a map of a gerrymandered congressional district. Visual information may also be expressed in a political cartoon or an infographic.

It is important to give students practice with a wide variety of visual sources. The textbook may contain some maps and cartoons, and the following resources provide a wealth of visuals to choose from for bell-ringer exercises and skills practice.

Additional resources include:

- The Political Maps website
- *The Week* (U.S. edition) website
- The cartoons section of the *U.S. News & World Report* website

Evaluating Quality and Credibility of Different Sources and Perspectives

Students have unprecedented access to information, so it is more important than ever to help them determine the credibility of sources. The course skills require students to evaluate the quality and credibility of different information sources and perspectives and derive supportable conclusions.

Teachers might want to provide students with a list of news media websites with different perspectives, such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*,

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the Huffington Post, Politico, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Real Clear Politics also offers a wide range of articles each day from different sources and on a variety of topics.

Students can examine international perspectives on U.S. government and politics through the BBC website, and English language versions of Al Jazeera and TASS. Schools might subscribe to databases of credible articles from trusted sources such as *Issues and Controversies*, available through the ABC-CLIO database.

The table below explains how students might address credibility or reliability of various sources.

Criteria	Considerations	Examples and Illustrations
Credibility	▪ Credibility requires students to obtain information from sources with knowledge and expertise in political science. Sources can be print, online, or expert interviews. ▪ Because many students are using the Internet or database sources, they should consider the following: ◆ The domain name extensions, which indicate who publishes and owns the domain ◆ Commonly used extensions, including: ● .edu (educational organization) ● .com (company) ● .org (any organization) ● .gov (government agency) ● .net (network) ◆ The author(s) of the website ◆ The credibility of sources cited in the materials as well as any websites they link to ▪ Read past the first slash in the domain name to see if the page might be someone's personal page. A personal page might be less credible or include a bias that distorts the facts. ▪ Finding out who the authors are, their credentials, and the organization(s) they are associated with will help determine whether they are qualified to write about the topic. ▪ An article that includes citations of resources is often more credible.	▪ Design a lesson to help students identify political perspective by comparing the headlines from different news sources, such as Fox News and MSNBC. ▪ Have students examine the language used in the lead stories, as well as the pictures that accompany them. ▪ Ask students to compare the focus of local news with that of national and international sources and discuss possible reasons certain stories are not covered in the news. ▪ Have students synthesize their findings in a short paper examining the role of the media in providing citizens with political information.
Reliability	▪ Students should examine the content of a source (the evidence) to ensure it supports their claims and provides insight and knowledge that relates to the topic. This means that evidence is only relevant when it addresses both the topic in context and the student's argument. ▪ Because we are investigating political processes and institutions that are changing and evolving, it is important to consider whether the information provided is the most current.	▪ An article about the life of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader-Ginsburg may not be relevant in supporting a claim about a particular Supreme Court decision. ▪ A public opinion poll from 2008 might not be relevant in 2018.

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Instructional Strategies

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course framework details the concepts and skills students must master in order to be successful on the AP Exam. In order to address those concepts and skills effectively, it helps to incorporate a variety of instructional approaches and best practices into daily lessons and activities. The following table presents strategies that could help students apply their understanding of course concepts.

Strategy	Definition	Purpose	Example
Create Representations	Students create tables, graphs, or other infographics to interpret text or data.	Helps students organize information using multiple ways to present data.	Give students a set of data, such as voting patterns by gender and ethnicity, and have them create a graph that best shows the data and the trends.
Close Reading	Students read, reread, and analyze small chunks of text word for word, sentence by sentence, and line by line.	Develops comprehensive understanding of text.	When students are reading the required foundational documents, have them highlight relevant words and passages that support the author's claim.
Critique Reasoning	Through collaborative discussion, students critique the arguments of others, questioning the author's perspective, evidence presented, and reasoning behind the argument.	Helps students learn from others as they make connections between concepts and learn to support their arguments with evidence and reasoning that make sense to peers.	Using *Federalist No. 70*, have students critique the argument for a strong executive. Have them examine the author's perspective and the evidence and reasoning he uses to support his position.
Debate	Students present an informal or formal argument that defends a claim with reasons while others defend different claims about the same topic or issue. The goal is to debate ideas without attacking the people who defend those ideas.	Gives students an opportunity to collect and orally present evidence supporting the arguments for or against a proposition or issue.	Have students debate which branch of government is the most powerful, using evidence and reasoning to support their claims.

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Strategy	Definition	Purpose	Example
Debriefing	Teachers facilitate a discussion that leads to consensus understanding or helps students identify the key conclusions or takeaways.	Helps students solidify and deepen understanding of content.	For complex issues such as the bureaucracy, lead students in a debrief to ensure understanding.
Discussion Group	Students engage in an interactive, small group discussion, often with assigned roles (e.g., questioner, summarizer, facilitator, evidence keeper) to consider a topic, text, or question.	Helps students gain new understanding of or insight into a text or issue by listening to multiple perspectives.	Assign students to groups to discuss a learning objective, such as *Explain how cultural factors influence political socialization*, with a view to helping them gain information and show their understanding.
Fishbowl	Some students form an inner circle and model appropriate discussion techniques while an outer circle of students listens, responds, and evaluates.	Provides students with an opportunity to engage in a formal discussion and to experience roles both as participant and active listener; students also have the responsibility of supporting their opinions and responses using specific textual evidence.	Use this strategy to discuss the arguments presented in the required documents and how they relate to our current government.
Graphic Organizer	These provide a way to represent ideas and information visually (e.g., Venn diagrams, flowcharts, cluster maps).	Provides students with a visual system for organizing multiple ideas, details, and/or textual support to be included in a piece of writing.	Graphic organizers can be helpful when comparing political beliefs, ideologies, principles, and models. Make sure students use any organizer thoughtfully and are not simply "filling in the blanks."
Guided Discussion	A guided discussion is an umbrella strategy that allows for the use of different techniques as you guide students through the lesson.	Helps students see the big picture and builds their confidence when dealing with difficult content or new skills.	Use brainstorming and quickwrite as strategies during a guided discussion to help students understand polling data about fiscal policy and how the data may affect political behavior.
Jigsaw	Each student in a group reads a different text or different passage from a single text, taking on the role of "expert" on what was read. Students share the information from that reading with students from other groups and then return to their original groups to share their new knowledge.	Helps students summarize and present information to others in a way that facilitates an understanding of a text (or multiple texts) or issue without having each student read the text in its entirety; by teaching others, they become experts.	Use this strategy to facilitate understanding of high-level readings, such as the *Federalist Papers* and other foundational documents.

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Strategy	Definition	Purpose	Example
Look for a Pattern	Students evaluate data or create visual representations to find a trend.	Helps students identify patterns that may be used to draw conclusions.	Show students a complex graph with at least two data sets—for example, showing voting patterns by age and gender—and have them compare the data to find a trend and draw a conclusion.
Making Connections	Students are given a concept, term, required case, or document and asked to write what they know about it. Then, students are paired and asked to determine, describe, and then explain the connection between the two concepts.	Reinforces the fact that political concepts are often connected and provides the opportunity for students to make and explain connections between and among these concepts.	Write concepts related to one of the course big ideas on cards and place them in a box. Have students pick a card at random. Give students a few minutes to gather and recall information about the term and then pair students and ask them to find the connection between their concepts. Finally, ask the pairs to write a brief explanation of how the concepts are related.
Match Claims and Evidence	Students are given sample claims (most of which can be improved upon) to evaluate and revise. Then students match their revised claims with pieces of evidence that can be used to support the claims. Once matched, students write a statement explaining how and why the evidence supports the claim.	Provides opportunities for students to edit existing claims and match those claims with evidence in preparation for writing their own argument essays.	In the early stages of practicing argumentation, ask small groups of students to write claims and supporting evidence statements based on a question structured in the same way as FRQ 4 (such as which branch of government is the most powerful). Have groups trade claims and evidence, revise or modify the claims (if necessary), match the claims and evidence, and write statements explaining why the evidence supports the claim.
Quickwrite	Students write for a short, specific amount of time about a designated topic.	Helps generate ideas in a short time.	As preparation for the free-response question in which students apply content knowledge to political processes, principles, or behaviors (as in FRQ 1), have them write ways the president's agenda can affect Congress or ways congressional behaviors can affect bureaucratic agencies.

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Strategy	Definition	Purpose	Example
Self/Peer Revision	Students work alone or with a partner to examine a piece of writing for accuracy and clarity.	Provides students with an opportunity to edit a written text to ensure the correctness of identified components.	Have students perform self- and peer revisions of their practice argument essays so they have the opportunity to review their practice claims, supporting evidence, sourcing, and analysis and reasoning.
Socratic Seminar	This is a focused discussion tied to a topic, essential question, or selected text in which students ask questions of one another. The questions initiate a conversation that continues with a series of responses and additional questions.	Helps students arrive at a new understanding by asking questions that clarify: challenging assumptions; probing perspective and point of view; questioning facts, reasons, and evidence; or examining implications and outcomes.	Use the essential questions, such as *Which branch of government is the most powerful? Why?* to initiate discussion during which students can illustrate their understanding of the learning objectives and essential knowledge statements.
Think-Pair-Share	Students think through a question or issue alone, pair with a partner to share ideas, and then share results with the class.	Enables the development of initial ideas that are then tested with a partner in preparation for revising ideas and sharing them with a larger group.	To practice comparing required Supreme Court cases to other related cases, give students a pair of cases and have them use Think-Pair-Share to come up with similarities, differences, and relevance to political institutions or processes.

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Developing the Course Skills

Throughout the course, students will develop skills that are fundamental to the discipline of political science. Students will benefit from multiple opportunities to practice them in a scaffolded manner, developing the same skills that adept political scientists demonstrate.

While a high school civics course provides students with information about American government, a college-level political science course will challenge students to put that knowledge into action through various discipline-based skills common to the field. One of the aims of the AP U.S. Government and Politics course is to have students think like political scientists.

The skills articulated in the course framework equip students to understand, analyze, and apply political information in a process similar to that followed by political scientists. This process begins with a close analysis of quantitative and qualitative sources and reaches its conclusion when evidence is used effectively to support an argument about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, or behaviors.

The course framework features a suggested skill for each course topic. However, teachers are free to use either that skill or one of their choosing to allow students to practice the skills using course content. It is important to help students develop all the skills throughout the course, and teachers should use their professional judgment to sequence and scaffold them appropriately for their students.

The tables on the pages that follow look at each of the skills and provide examples of questions along with instructional strategies for incorporating those practices into instruction.

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Skill Category 1: Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context

Political scientists practice their discipline through the application of knowledge to different contexts and scenarios and the current political environment. Student in the AP U.S. Government and Politics course have this same opportunity through this skill.

The table that follows provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for teaching students to successfully apply political concepts in the course.

Skill Category 1: *Concept Application*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
1.A. *Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	▪ Describe characteristics and traits of terms and concepts. ▪ Classify terms and concepts.	Students need to demonstrate understanding by describing and explaining before they can apply their knowledge. So, before beginning a deeper discussion on gerrymandering and congressional elections, have students describe how members of the House of Representatives are elected and the length of their terms. (Topics 2.1 and 2.3)	▪ Look for a Pattern
1.B. *Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	▪ Identify and describe the steps and/or stages in a process. ▪ Explain how and why a process changes. ▪ Explain the significance of a process.	Ask students to explain the process of congressional apportionment and the principles and processes involved in drawing congressional districts. (Topic 2.3)	▪ Discussion Group ▪ Graphic Organizer ▪ Making Connections
1.C. *Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	▪ Identify the relevant, specific categories for comparing similarities and differences. ▪ Explain the reasons for the relevant similarities and differences. ▪ Explain the relevance, implications, and/or significance of the similarities and differences.	Make sure students understand that they need to identify relevant and specific similarities and differences. They should compare like factors. Ask students to identify and then explain relevant, specific similarities and differences among liberal, conservative, and libertarian ideologies. Have them compare like categories, such as economic policy or social policy. (Topics 4.9–4.10)	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Graphic Organizer ▪ Think-Pair-Share ▪ Making Connections

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Skill Category 1: *Concept Application*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
1.D. *Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.*	▪ Describe how political behaviors, policies, institutions, or constitutional interpretations have changed over time based on specific examples. ▪ Describe the reasons for causes and effects. ▪ Describe the concepts using real-world scenarios.	Ask students to explain how a political process, such as a presidential election, has changed over time. (Topic 5.8) Have students explain reasons why presidential elections have changed, such as the influence of special interest groups on campaign finance. (Topics 5.10–5.11) Ask students to describe how presidential elections have changed based on real-world scenarios, such as the ruling in the *Citizens United* case, or in a scenario such as if the Supreme Court were to overturn *Citizens United*. (Topic 5.11)	▪ Think-Pair-Share ▪ Discussion Group
1.E. *Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.*	▪ Explain how political behaviors, policies, institutions, or constitutional interpretations have changed over time, using specific examples and scenarios. ▪ Explain the potential implications of policies or behaviors change over time. ▪ Identify and explain the reasons for causes and effects.	Have students examine a political institution, such as the bureaucracy, and explain how that institution has changed over time. (Topic 2.12) Ask students to explain the implications of the growing bureaucracy. (Topic 2.13) Students could point to expansions in the bureaucracy due to events such as 9/11 or a scenario in which an administration reduces the scope of or eliminates some bureaucratic agencies. (Topic 2.13)	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Think-Pair-Share ▪ Debate ▪ Discussion Group

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Skill Category 2: Apply Supreme Court decisions

Studying the application of Supreme Court cases helps students understand the implications of the required Supreme Court decisions, making the concepts relevant to their lives today.

The table that follows provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for teaching students to successfully apply Supreme Court cases in the course.

Skill Category 2: *SCOTUS Application*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
2.A. *Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.*	▪ Describe specific events that led to a Supreme Court case ▪ Describe the ruling of the Court ▪ Describe the reasoning used by the majority that led to the holding	Have students develop a case brief or a set of case notes for each required Supreme Court case. Each set of notes should include the basic facts of the case, the majority decision, and the reasoning behind the majority opinion. (Topic 3.3)	▪ Graphic Organizer ▪ Close Reading ▪ Guided Discussion
2.B. *Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.*	▪ Describe the political principle or concept demonstrated in both the Supreme Court case and the document. ▪ Explain what the document and the case have in common and why. ▪ Explain the implications of the case for the document author's claim or vice versa.	In a pairing/comparison exercise, have students relate the reasoning, decision, and opinion in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC)* (2010) to Madison's argument in *Federalist No. 10*. (Topic 5.11)	▪ Think-Pair-Share ▪ Graphic Organizer ▪ Fishbowl ▪ Socratic Seminar
2.C. *Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.*	▪ Find relevant, specific categories to compare two Supreme Court cases. ▪ Using those categories, explain the similarities and differences between the details of the cases and the decisions of the Supreme Court. ▪ Identify the constitutional principle on which the decisions were based. ▪ Identify the majority opinions in the cases. ▪ Identify the reasoning behind the majority opinions. ▪ Compare the reasoning behind the majority opinions of the two cases.	Ask students to compare a required Supreme Court case, such as *Engel v. Vitale*, and a non-required but similar case, such as *Town of Greece, NY v. Galloway*. Have students identify and describe in detail the similarities and differences in these cases. Students should recognize that both cases were based on the establishment clause from the First Amendment, but that the Supreme Court's decisions were different. They should also be able to explain why the Court found differently in *Greece v. Galloway*. (Topic 3.2)	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Debate ▪ Graphic Organizer

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Skill Category 2: *SCOTUS Application*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
2.D. *Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a relevant political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.*	▪ Describe patterns and trends. Use these to extend and apply Supreme Court cases in different contexts and scenarios.	Ask students to describe the underlying constitutional principle in *Wisconsin v. Yoder*. Tell students that California has passed a law requiring parents to vaccinate their children. Have them explain how *Wisconsin v. Yoder* may be used as precedent if this law were to come before the current Supreme Court. Then ask them to explore how the Court might rule on this case based on precedent and the current makeup of the Court. (Topic 3.2)	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Debate ▪ Discussion Group ▪ Making Connections ▪ Socratic Seminar

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Skill Category 3: Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphics, maps, and infographics

The analysis, interpretation, and application of quantitative information are vital skills for students in AP U.S. Government and Politics. Analysis skills can be taught using any type of quantitative information, but students should use current data so that they can draw accurate conclusions and apply that knowledge to learning objectives in the course framework.

The table that follows provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for implementing quantitative resources in the course.

Skill Category 3: *Data Analysis*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
3.A. *Describe the data presented.*	▪ How is the data presented? ▪ What does the data show?	Have students analyze a bar graph showing the percentage of voters in presidential elections by age range and have them determine what the data shows. (Topic 5.2)	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Create Representations
3.B. *Describe patterns and trends in data.*	▪ What do you notice about the data? ▪ What trends and patterns can you identify from the data?	Ask students to describe the patterns and trends in the data, such as that voting percentage increases as people age. (Topic 5.2)	▪ Debriefing ▪ Create Representations
3.C. *Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.*	▪ Why is the data displayed as it is? ▪ What does the author of the chart or graph want to show us? ▪ What conclusions can you draw by comparing the trends you found in the data? ▪ What evidence do you have to support that conclusion?	Challenge students to compare the trends and draw a conclusion about the data. They should also explain their reasoning. For example, a graph may show that less than 40% of people under the age of 24 vote, but over 70% of people aged 65–74 vote. Students could conclude that candidates are unlikely to champion issues favored mostly by the young because young people are not as likely to vote as older people. (Topics 5.2–5.4)	▪ Debriefing ▪ Guided Discussion

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Skill Category 3: *Data Analysis*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
3.D. *Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	▪ What concept or principle does this data remind you of? ▪ How does this data relate to a political process? ▪ What could political parties learn from this data that would affect how they operate?	Have students apply this information to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior. Students could use this data to explain how political parties choose candidates and party platforms. (Topics 5.3–5.4)	▪ Think-Pair-Share ▪ Guided Discussion
3.E. *Explain possible limitations of the data provided.*	▪ What does the data not tell you? ▪ What do you know about the group or organization providing the data? How does that knowledge influence what conclusions you can draw from the data?	Lead students to analyze possible limitations of the data that is represented, such as that it shows only age and no other demographics. (Topic 5.2)	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Create Representations ▪ Discussion Group
3.F. *Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.*	▪ How does the way the data is presented limit what we can know about the political concept or principle? ▪ How does the way the data is presented limit its value?	Lead students to analyze possible limitations in how the data is represented visually. One limitation could be that a bar graph shows voting percentage by age range as one data point but does not represent the fluctuation within those age ranges that a line graph would show. (Topic 5.2)	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Create Representations ▪ Discussion Group

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Skill Category 4: Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources

TEXT-BASED SOURCES

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course requires students to analyze texts in terms of perspective, conclusions, and supporting evidence, and understand how they illustrate principles and processes of U.S. government. The primary function of using sources in this course is to help students understand the principles and processes of U.S. government. In these texts, the founders, political scientists, and other scholars develop their ideas and arguments.

To understand the argument, reasoning, and implications of these texts, students should:

- Identify the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
- Put the argument, perspective, evidence, or reasoning in their own words
- Identify the reasoning the used to justify the argument, perspective, evidence, or reasoning
- Explain the evidence used to support the argument and the reasoning
- Identify evidence that supports alternative perspectives
- Explain how the alternative perspectives rebut or refute the author's argument
- Critique the author's argument, pointing out its strengths and weaknesses
- Explain the implications of the author's argument
- Explain how the author's argument relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, or behaviors

The table that follows provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for implementing qualitative text-based resources in the course.

Skill Category 4: *Source Analysis—Text-Based Sources*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
4.A. *Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.*	▪ Who is the author? ▪ What is the author's perspective? ▪ Why did the author write this? ▪ What do I know about the author and what the author thinks about government and political principles? ▪ What is the author's argument? ▪ What evidence does the author use to support the argument? ▪ What reasoning does the author use to justify the argument?	Lead students on a close reading of *Federalist No. 10*. Ask them to identify the author, his perspective, and his argument. Then ask students to identify what evidence and reasoning Madison provides in support of his argument. (Topic 1.2)	▪ Close Reading ▪ Critique Reasoning ▪ Jigsaw

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Skill Category 4: *Source Analysis—Text-Based Sources*

Skill	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
4.B. *Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	▪ What political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior have you studied that is related to the author's claim and argument? ▪ How is the author's claim or argument related to that political principle or concept?	Have students connect Madison's historical argument to the way our government is run today. (Topics 1.2–1.3)	▪ Socratic Seminar ▪ Discussion Group ▪ Self/Peer Revision ▪ Making Connections
4.C. *Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	▪ What would happen if you followed the author's advice? ▪ How does the author's position affect an American political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior?	Challenge students to determine how Madison's argument in *Federalist No. 10* affected the political processes and institutions that led to the ratification of the Constitution. (Topics 1.2–1.3 and 1.5)	▪ Discussion Group ▪ Socratic Seminar

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VISUAL SOURCES

Maps, infographics, and political cartoons can also help students understand the principles and processes of U.S. government. Often the visual presentation of a political science concept, such as gerrymandering, carries more weight than a textual source provides. At the same time, political cartoons provide insight into factions, ideologies, and the relationship between the government and the people.

The table that follows provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for implementing analysis of visual sources in the course.

Skill Category 4: *Source Analysis—Visual Sources*

Skills	Type of Visual	Questions/Tasks	Sample Instructional Strategies
4.A. *Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.*	**Map**	▪ What is being shown in the map? ▪ What perspective is being shown in the map?	▪ Look for a Pattern ▪ Create Representations
	Infographic	▪ What is being presented through this infographic? ▪ Who created the infographic? ▪ What argument is the creator making? ▪ What perspective can you identify?	▪ Look for a Pattern
	Political Cartoon	▪ Describe the characters, objects, and actions in the cartoon. What is the cartoon about? How does the text help convey the message? ▪ What claim is the cartoonist trying to convey?	▪ Jigsaw ▪ Think-Pair-Share
4.C. *Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	**Map**	▪ What are the implications of the author's perspective? Relate that to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.	▪ Critique Reasoning ▪ Debate ▪ Quickwrite
	Infographic	▪ What are the implications of the details from the infographic? ▪ How do the images in the infographic affect the author's argument?	▪ Debate ▪ Discussion Group ▪ Quickwrite
	Political Cartoon	▪ Which perspective is the cartoonist supporting? ▪ What alternative perspectives exist? ▪ What is the implication of the cartoonist's argument?	▪ Critique Reasoning ▪ Debate ▪ Quickwrite

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Skill Category 4: *Source Analysis—Visual Sources*

Skills	Type of Visual	Questions/Tasks	Sample Instructional Strategies
4.D. *Explain how the visual elements of the source (a cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.*	**Map**	▪ How does what you see relate to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior?	▪ Think-Pair-Share ▪ Graphic Organizer
	Infographic	▪ What are the elements in the infographic saying about a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior?	▪ Critique Reasoning ▪ Think-Pair-Share
	Political Cartoon	▪ Relate the cartoonist's message to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior. What is the cartoonist saying about this issue?	▪ Critique Reasoning ▪ Think-Pair-Share

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Skill Category 5: Develop an argument in essay format

Political scientists examine data, evidence, and differing perspectives to develop claims about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. As they begin to articulate their positions, political scientists use reasoning processes that rely on their awareness of different types of relationships, connections, and patterns within the data, evidence, and perspectives. They then formulate a claim, or thesis, and develop an argument that explains how the claim is supported by the available evidence.

A strong argument also accounts for how some evidence might seem to rebut or refute the claim, addressing alternate perspectives. Students should practice creating persuasive and meaningful arguments to improve their proficiency with each of these practices in turn.

APPLYING REASONING

In order to develop an argument, political scientists formulate a claim, or thesis, that is based on logical reasoning. A meaningful claim must be based in evidence, defensible, and evaluative; it must take a stance on an issue that could plausibly be argued differently; and it must go beyond simply listing causes or factors, qualifying its assertions by looking at an issue from multiple perspectives or through different lenses. The reasoning used in the thesis often sets up the structure of the argument in the essay that follows. These reasonings might involve:

- Explaining political processes, relationships among or between processes, and/or issues or implications surrounding these processes
- Identifying areas of similarity or difference between issues, policies, ideologies, or institutions in order to consider possible underlying reasons for similarity or difference
- Considering both the immediate causes or effects of an event as well as long-term causes or effects, and assigning a relative significance to each

The table that follows provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for teaching students to successfully write an argument essay in the course.

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Skill Category 5: *Argumentation*

Skills	Questions/Tasks	Sample Activities	Sample Instructional Strategies
5.A. *Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.*	▪ What possible positions could you take based on the question and the evidence? ▪ What position do you want to take? What claim will you make? ▪ What is your purpose (to define, show causality, compare, or explain a process)? ▪ What reasons justify your claim and achieve your purpose? ▪ What evidence supports your claim and reasoning? ▪ What evidence runs counter to your claim and reasoning? ▪ Write a defensible claim or thesis statement that reflects your reasoning and evidence.	Give students a question, such as *Which of the following is most responsible for the expansion of civil rights and liberties: social movements, an activist Supreme Court, or a motivated legislative branch?* Use *"Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), or Article I of the U.S. Constitution in addition to your knowledge of the U.S. government as evidence to support your position. Students should analyze all possibilities and the evidence for and against each position. Have students choose a position and write a defensible claim or thesis that reflects their reasoning and evidence. (Topic 3.12)	▪ Match Claims and Evidence ▪ Debate ▪ Quickwrite
5.B. *Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.*	▪ What evidence supports your claim? ▪ How does the evidence support your claim?	Have students identify and explain the evidence that supports their position, with an emphasis on *how* the evidence supports the claim. (Topic 3.12)	▪ Match Claims and Evidence ▪ Critique Reasoning
5.C. *Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.*	▪ Explain why your evidence supports your claim, using a transition such as *because* or *therefore*. ▪ Question your reasoning. Does it make sense? Have you provided a solid explanation of your reasoning?	Ask students to "close the loop" and explain *why* the evidence supports their claim by using reasoning processes. (Topic 3.12)	▪ Match Claims and Evidence ▪ Critique Reasoning
5.D. *Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation.*	▪ What evidence goes against your claim? ▪ What could someone with an opposing view say about your claim, based on the evidence? ▪ Taking the rebuttal evidence into account, why is your claim still the best?	Challenge students to identify and explain evidence that rebuts or refutes their claim. A strong essay acknowledges contrary positions and uses other evidence to show why the author's position is the best choice. (Topic 3.12)	▪ Critique Reasoning ▪ Debate ▪ Self/Peer Revision

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AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Exam Information

Exam Overview

The AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam assesses student understanding of the skills and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 3 hours long and includes 55 multiple-choice questions and 4 free-response questions. The details of the exam, including exam weighting and timing, can be found below:

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Exam Weighting	Timing
I	**Multiple-choice questions**	**55**	**50%**	**80 minutes**
II	**Free-response questions**	**4**	**50%**	**100 minutes (recommended timing below)**
	Question 1: Concept Application (3 points)		12.5%	20 minutes
	Question 2: Quantitative Analysis (4 points)		12.5%	20 minutes
	Question 3: SCOTUS Comparison (4 points)		12.5%	20 minutes
	Question 4: Argument Essay (6 points)		12.5%	40 minutes

The AP Exam also assesses the five units of the course with the following exam weighting on the multiple-choice section:

Units	Exam Weighting
Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy	**15–22%**
Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government	**25–36%**
Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	**13–18%**
Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs	**10–15%**
Unit 5: Political Participation	**20–27%**

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How Student Learning Is Assessed on the AP Exam

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course skills are assessed on the AP Exam as detailed below.

	Multiple-Choice Section	Free-Response Section
Skill Category 1: Concept Application	Individual and set-based multiple-choice questions assess students' ability to apply political concepts and processes in hypothetical and authentic contexts. Students will need to describe, explain, and compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	Free-response question 1 focuses exclusively on Skill Category 1.
Skill Category 2: SCOTUS Application	Individual and set-based multiple-choice questions will assess students' ability to apply Supreme Court decisions in authentic contexts. Students will need to describe and compare relevant information about the required Supreme Court Cases. Students will also need to explain how required Supreme Court cases relate to non-required Supreme Court Cases, foundational documents, and other sources.	Free-response question 3 focuses primarily on Skill Category 2.
Skill Category 3: Data Analysis	Set-based multiple-choice questions will assess students' ability to analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics. Students will need to describe and explain data and explain the relationship between the data and political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behavior.	Free-response question 2 focuses exclusively on Skill Category 3.
Skill Category 4: Source Analysis	Set-based multiple-choice questions will assess students' ability to read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources. Students will need to describe and explain claims, evidence, perspective, and reasoning in sources. Additionally, students will need to explain how text-based and visual sources relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.	Skill Category 4 is not explicitly assessed in the free-response section.
Skill Category 5: Argumentation	No multiple-choice questions explicitly assess the argumentation skill.	Free-response question 4 focuses exclusively on Skill Category 5.

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Section I: Multiple-Choice

The first section of the AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam includes 55 multiple-choice questions appearing either as individual questions or in sets of typically two to four questions each. The following chart lays out the different types of questions.

Question Type	Number of Questions	Stimulus Type	Skills Assessed
Quantitative analysis	Five sets: two to three questions per set	Each set includes one or more of the following quantitative data as a stimulus: line graphs, charts, tables, maps, and/or infographics.	Skill Category 3 primarily; also Skill Categories 1 and 2
Text-based analysis	Two sets: three to four questions per set	One set includes a foundational document as a stimulus. The other set includes as a stimulus a primary or secondary text-based source.	Skill Category 4 primarily; also Skill Categories 1 and 2
Visual source analysis	Three sets: two questions per set	Each set includes one visual stimulus, including a map, cartoon, and/or infographic.	Skill Category 4 primarily; also Skill Categories 1 and 2
Individual multiple-choice questions	Approximately 30	No stimulus	Skill Categories 1 and 2

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Section II: Free-Response

The second section of the AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam includes four free-response questions, each weighted equally.

Free-response question 1: Concept Application presents students with an authentic scenario. This question assesses student ability to describe and explain the effects of a political institution, behavior, or process. Additionally, this question assesses student ability to transfer understanding of course concepts and apply them in a new situation or scenario.

Free-response question 2: Quantitative Analysis presents students with quantitative data in the form of a table, graph, map, or infographic. This question assesses students' ability to perform the following:

- Describe the data presented
- Describe a pattern, trend, similarity, or difference in the data presented
- Draw a conclusion based on the data
- Explain how the data demonstrate a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior

Free-response question 3: SCOTUS Comparison presents students with information about a non-required Supreme Court Case. For the required Supreme Court case, students should know the facts, the issue(s), the holdings, and the reasoning behind the decisions. On the AP Exam, students will need to apply this information to a real-world scenario or in comparison to another case. Any non-required Supreme Court case that appears on AP Exams will be accompanied by a summary containing all information necessary to compare the non-required case to required SCOTUS cases. This question assesses students' ability to do the following:

- Identify a similarity or difference between the non-required Supreme Court case and a specified Supreme Court case required in the course
- Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision or majority opinion of the required Supreme Court case specified in the question
- Explain a similarity or difference in the facts, issues, holdings, reasonings, or decisions of the two Supreme Court cases
- Explain how the holding, reasoning, or decision in the required or non-required Supreme Court case demonstrates a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior

Free-response question 4: Argument Essay assesses students' ability to do the following:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the question and establishes a line of reasoning
- Provide evidence from one of the foundational documents listed in the question to support the claim
- Provide evidence from a second foundational document or from knowledge of course concepts to support the claim
- Use reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim
- Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation.

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Task Verbs Used in Free-Response Questions

The following task verbs are commonly used in the free-response questions:

Compare: Provide a description or explanation of similarities and/or differences.

Define: Provide a specific meaning for a word or concept.

Describe: Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic.

Develop an argument: Articulate a claim and support it with evidence.

Draw a conclusion: Use available information to formulate an accurate statement that demonstrates understanding based on evidence.

Explain: Provide information about how or why a relationship, process, pattern, position, situation, or outcome occurs, using evidence and/or reasoning. Explain "how" typically requires analyzing the relationship, process, pattern, position, situation, or outcome, whereas explain "why" typically requires analysis of motivations or reasons for the relationship, process, pattern, position, situation, or outcome.

Identify: Indicate or provide information about a specified topic, without elaboration or explanation.

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Sample Exam Questions

The sample exam questions that follow illustrate the relationship between the course framework and the AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam and serve as examples of the types of questions that appear on the exam. After the sample questions is a table that shows to which skill, learning objective(s), and unit each question relates. The table also provides the answers to the multiple-choice questions.

Section I: Multiple-Choice

1. Despite concerns raised by her constituents, a member of the House of Representatives votes in favor of a bill, believing that in the long term it is in the best interest of her constituents. This is an example of which of the following models of representation?
   (A) Delegate
   (B) Politico
   (C) Trustee
   (D) Virtual

2. Which of the following is an accurate comparison of the arguments made in *The Federalist* 10 and *Brutus* 1?

	The Federalist 10	*Brutus* 1
(A)	Factions are inevitable with popular sovereignty.	A strong national government is needed.
(B)	Factions are most dangerous at the local level.	Small republics are best for stable governments.
(C)	Power should be concentrated in the executive branch to address factions.	National government is too far from the people.
(D)	The effects of factions cannot be controlled.	Popular sovereignty leads to anarchy.

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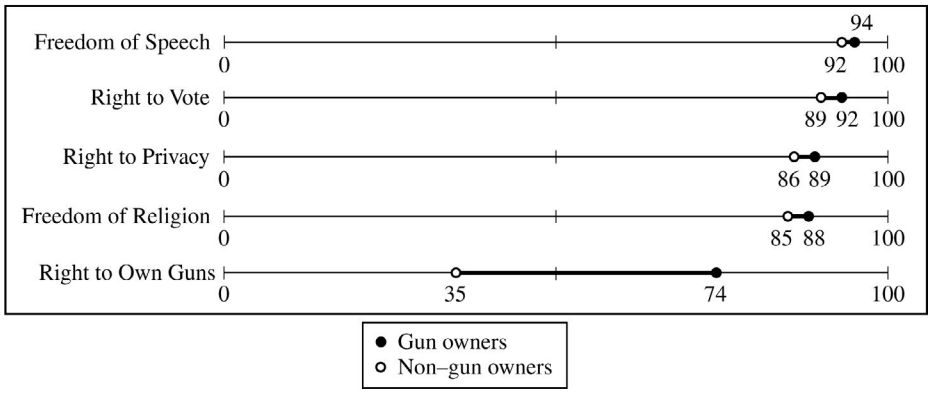
Questions 3 and 4 refer to the chart.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIEWS ON CIVIL LIBERTIES AND GUN OWNERSHIP
Percent who agree the specific right/liberty is essential to their own sense of freedom



Source: Survey of United States adults conducted March 13-27 and April 4, 2017, Pew Research Center

3. According to the data, both gun owners and non–gun owners
   (A) answered similarly regarding the importance of the right to own guns
   (B) believed that the right to vote was less essential than freedom of religion
   (C) chose freedom of speech as most essential to their own liberty
   (D) demonstrated deep division between one another in most categories

4. Which of the following best explains how poll respondents regard the relationship between the right to own guns and personal freedom?
   (A) The poll shows there is an ongoing debate over whether gun control laws promote or interfere with individual rights.
   (B) The poll shows that gun owners and non-gun owners have widely different views over a range of civil liberties issues.
   (C) The poll shows that party polarization has a sizable impact on elections and policymaking at each level of government.
   (D) The poll shows that even Congress has mixed opinions as to whether the second amendment involves individual liberty.

5. Which of the following powers allows both the federal and state governments to make policies involving taxation?
   (A) Concurrent powers
   (B) Exclusive powers
   (C) Implied powers
   (D) Enumerated powers

6. In which of the following ways could the president try to limit the impact of a Supreme Court decision?
   (A) Calling for the removal of the Supreme Court justices
   (B) Instructing the Department of Justice to delay enforcement of a provision in the decision.
   (C) Passing legislation that overrides the Court's opinion
   (D) Changing the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

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Questions 7–9 refer to the excerpt below.

> The vice of the groupist theory is that it conceals the most significant aspects of the system. The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent. Probably about 90 percent of the people cannot get into the pressure system.
>
> The notion that the pressure system is automatically representative of the whole community is a myth fostered by the universalizing tendency of modern group theories. *Pressure politics is a selective process* ill designed to serve diffuse interests. The system is skewed, loaded, and unbalanced in favor of a fraction of a minority.
>
> —E. E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, 1960

7. Which of the following best captures the author's argument regarding the forms of democracy?
   (A) Pluralist democracy, which seeks to shield elites from popular opinion, functions best when individual citizens do not participate in the process.
   (B) Participatory democracy, which emphasizes limited participation, marginalizes those who do not have the economic means to participate.
   (C) Pluralist democracy, though it involves groups at different stages of the process of developing policy, excludes a significant portion of the population.
   (D) Participatory democracy, which emphasizes expanded participation, creates too much conflict within the system.

8. Which of the following statements about interest groups would the author most likely agree with?
   (A) Interest groups play the important function of including more people in elections.
   (B) Interest groups undermine stability by creating too much conflict and polarization in politics.
   (C) Interest groups tend to over-represent elite interests.
   (D) Interest groups have less power in American government than political parties have.

9. Which of the following activities would the author most likely be concerned about interest groups engaging in?
   (A) Educating and mobilizing citizens around their cause
   (B) Introducing legislation that limits the power of others
   (C) Representing broad segments of society and sparking emotional political debates
   (D) Forming iron triangles with bureaucratic agencies and congressional committees

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10. According to the United States Constitution, all revenue bills must
    (A) be passed by a conference committee
    (B) originate in the House of Representatives
    (C) be passed by two-thirds of the Senate
    (D) be reviewed by the Supreme Court

11. Which of the following illustrates an economic policy most likely supported by an ideologically liberal individual?
    (A) The Federal Reserve increasing interest rates
    (B) Congress placing regulations on the marketplace by increasing the minimum wage
    (C) A bill that would decrease funding for the food stamp program
    (D) A state lowering income taxes to attract businesses

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Questions 12 and 13 refer to the political cartoon.

12. Which of the following is the best interpretation of the political cartoon?
    (A) Members of Congress are richer than the people they represent.
    (B) Members of Congress represent a wide diversity of political and economic interests.
    (C) Members of Congress receive political contributions from many special interest groups.
    (D) Members of Congress are specialists in economic policy issues.

13. Which of the following Supreme Court cases is most related to the topic in the cartoon?
    (A) *United States* v. *Lopez* (1995)
    (B) *McDonald* v. *Chicago* (2010)
    (C) *Shaw* v. *Reno* (1993)
    (D) *Citizens United* v. *Federal Elections Commission* (2010)

14. Which of the following arguments best supports a claim that the Electoral College does not fully support democratic principles?
    (A) The winner-take-all system encourages candidates to campaign in every state, which limits the attention each state will receive from the candidates.
    (B) Electors are chosen by the voters in each state, which gives parties undue influence over candidates' success.
    (C) At times, a candidate who receives the most popular votes may not win the presidential election.
    (D) The Electoral College lacks transparency because electors frequently switch their vote during the national convention.

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15. Which of the following best describes the reasoning in *Baker* v. *Carr* (1961)?

(A) Unequal representation of citizens in legislative districts is unconstitutional and may be reviewed by the courts.

(B) Political issues such as reapportionment, redistricting, and gerrymandering are to be resolved by the legislative branch.

(C) Racial gerrymandering is a violation of the Fourth Amendment's exclusionary clause.

(D) Gerrymandering that favors a single party is not subject to legal action because there is no standard to determine how a state legislative district map should be drawn.

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Section II: Free-Response

The following are examples of the kinds of free-response questions found on the exam.

Concept Application (Free-Response Question 1 on the AP Exam)

The National Association of Home Builders, a national interest group that represents over 140,000 members in the home construction industry, has endorsed David Valadao (R) for reelection in California's Twenty-First Congressional District in the 2018 midterm election.

"Rep. Valadao has made housing and home ownership a top national priority and understands that expanding housing opportunities for all Americans is essential to the economic and social well-being of our nation," said Randy Noel, chairman of the National Association of Home Builders.

"We are proud to endorse Rep. Valadao for reelection in November because he helped to shepherd the landmark tax reform bill through Congress that will put more money into the pockets of hard-working families, reduce the tax burden for small businesses and promote job and economic growth," Noel said.

Recent polls show Valadao holding an 11-point lead over Democratic challenger T. J. Cox.

Source: "Valadao Picks Up Several Endorsements," *Hanford Sentinel* (Hanford, CA), October 19, 2018.

After reading the scenario, respond to A, B, and C below:

(A) Describe an action being taken by the National Association of Home Builders in the scenario.

(B) Explain how the action described in Part A affects policymaking in Congress.

(C) Another group interested in conserving land in California supports the Democratic candidate in the election. Rather than having 140,000 members, the group is led by a few very wealthy families. Explain how this difference will likely affect the conservationist group's strategy in the election.

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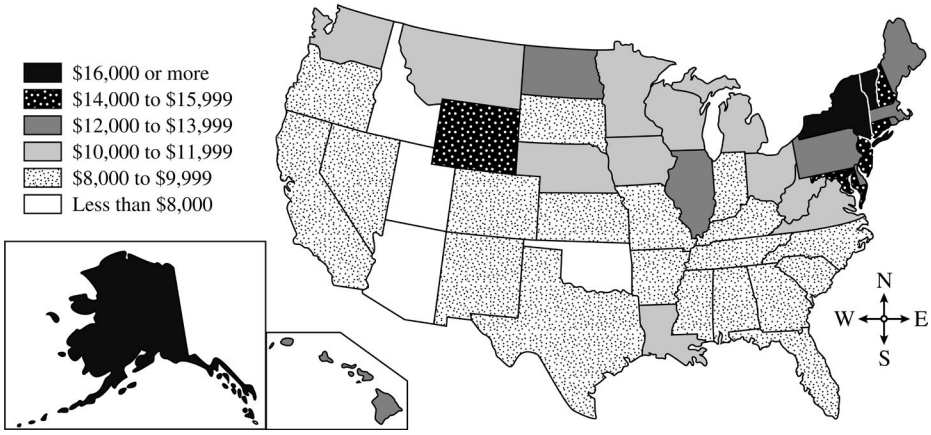
PUBLIC EDUCATION SPENDING: AMOUNT SPENT PER PUPIL BY STATE IN 2014



Source: FairVote. www.census.gov

Quantitative Analysis (Free-Response Question 2 on the AP Exam)

Use the information graphic to answer the questions.

(A) Identify the most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast.

(B) Describe a similarity or difference in public education spending by state or region, as illustrated in the information graphic.

(C) Draw a conclusion about that similarity or difference in public education spending by state or region illustrated in the information graphic.

(D) Explain how public education spending as shown in the information graphic demonstrates the principle of federalism.

SCOTUS Comparison (Free-Response Question 3 on the AP Exam)

This question requires you to compare a Supreme Court case you studied in class with one you have not studied in class. A summary of the Supreme Court case you did not study in class is presented below and provides all of the information you need to know about this case to answer the prompts.

In 1935, Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which among other things guaranteed workers the right to join a labor union and collectively bargain with employers. The law also established the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), an independent agency responsible for enforcing the law.

The Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation fired ten workers attempting to unionize its plant located in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. When the National Labor Relations Board determined this to be in violation of the recently passed NLRA, the company sued claiming that labor relations had only an indirect effect on commerce, and thus Congress did not have the constitutional power to regulate it.

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In the subsequent case, *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation* (1937), the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the National Labor Relations Board by a 5–4 vote, holding that the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation conducted interstate commerce and that industrial labor relations affects that commerce.

(A) Identify the constitutional clause that is common in both *United States* v. *Lopez (1995)* and *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation* (1937).

(B) Explain how the facts in *United States* v. *Lopez* led to a different holding than in *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation*.

(C) Explain how the holding in *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation* affected the balance of power between the states and the national government.

Argument Essay (Free-Response Question 4 on the AP Exam)

Develop an argument that explains which of the three models of representative democracy—participatory, pluralist, or elite—best achieves the founders' intent for American democracy in terms of ensuring a stable government run by the people.

Use at least one piece of evidence from one of the following foundational documents:

- Brutus 1
- Federalist No. 10
- U.S. Constitution

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of specific and relevant evidence
  - One piece of evidence must come from one of the foundational documents listed above.
  - A second piece of evidence can come from any other foundational document not used as your first piece of evidence, or it may be from your knowledge of course concepts
- Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim or thesis.
- Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation.

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Answer Key and Question Alignment to Course Framework

Multiple-Choice Question	Answer	Skill	Learning Objective	Unit
1	C	1.E	LO 2.3.A	2
2	B	1.C	LO 1.3.A	1
3	C	3.A	LO 1.3.A	3
4	A	3.C	LO 1.3.A	3
5	A	1.B	LO 1.7.A	1
6	B	1.B	LO 2.11.B	2
7	C	4.A	LO 1.2.A	1
8	C	4.B	LO 5.6.B	5
9	D	4.B	LO 5.6.A	5
10	B	1.A	LO 2.1.A	2
11	B	1.E	LO 4.9.B	4
12	C	4.D	LO 5.11.A	5
13	D	2.D	LO 5.11.A	5
14	C	1.B	LO 5.8.B	5
15	A	2.A	LO 2.3.A	2

Free-Response Question	Question Type	Skill	Learning Objectives	Unit
1	Concept Application	1.D, I.E	LO 5.6.A, LO 5.7.A	5
2	Quantitative Analysis	3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 3.D	LO 1.7.A	1
3	SCOTUS Comparison	1.E, 2.A, 2.C	LO 1.7.A, LO 1.8.A	1
4	Argument Essay	5.A, 5.B, 5.C, 5.D	LO 1.1.A, LO 1.2.A, LO 1.3.A, LO 5.1.A, LO 5.3.B, LO 5.5.A, LO 5.8.B	1, 5

The scoring information for the questions within this course and exam description, along with further exam resources, can be found on the **AP U.S. Government and Politics Exam Page** on AP Central.

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Scoring Guidelines

Question 1: Concept Application

The National Association of Home Builders, a national interest group that represents over 140,000 members in the home construction industry, has endorsed David Valadao (R) for reelection in California's Twenty-First Congressional District in the 2018 midterm election.

"Rep. Valadao has made housing and home ownership a top national priority and understands that expanding housing opportunities for all Americans is essential to the economic and social well-being of our nation," said Randy Noel, chairman of the National Association of Home Builders.

"We are proud to endorse Rep. Valadao for reelection in November because he helped to shepherd the landmark tax reform bill through Congress that will put more money into the pockets of hard-working families, reduce the tax burden for small businesses and promote job and economic growth," Noel said.

Recent polls show Valadao holding an 11-point lead over Democratic challenger T. J. Cox.

Source: "Valadao Picks Up Several Endorsements," *Hanford Sentinel* (Hanford, CA), October 19, 2018.

After reading the scenario, respond to A, B, and C below:

(A) Describe an action being taken by the National Association of Home Builders in the scenario.

(B) Explain how the action described in Part A affects policymaking in Congress.

(C) Another group interested in conserving land in California supports the Democratic candidate in the election. Rather than having 140,000 members, the group is led by a few very wealthy families. Explain how this difference will likely affect the conservationist group's strategy in the election.

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Scoring Guideline for Question 1: Concept Application — 3 points

Learning Objectives: LO 5.6.A LO 5.7.A

(A) Describe an action being taken by the National Association of Home Builders in the scenario. — **1 point** — 1.D

Acceptable description:

- By releasing a statement supporting Representative Valadao, the Home Builders Association is educating voters about the candidate in the upcoming election.

(B) Explain how the action described in Part A affects policymaking in Congress. — **1 point** — 1.E

Acceptable explanations include:

- By publicly supporting candidates in elections, interest groups demonstrate to members of Congress their ability to affect elections, which could lead to members of Congress supporting the legislation promoted by the Home Builders Association.
- If interest groups publicly support candidates, members of Congress will likely recognize the political power of those interest groups when considering legislation that affects those groups. So, if members of Congress oppose this legislation, they run the risk of facing potential opposition from the Home Builders Association in the next election.

(C) Explain how this difference will likely affect the conservationist group's strategy in the election. — **1 point** — 1.E

Acceptable explanations include:

- Groups with more members, such as the Home Builders Association, are generally more active in endorsing and publicly supporting candidates because they have strength in numbers with their memberships. A group that does not have many members but has funding, such as the conservationist group described in the scenario, will need to consider a different strategy, such as forming a political action committee or a super PAC.
- A conservationist group will probably use a different strategy because they have less members. Since they have money for funding they could collect large amounts of money to donate to the campaign.

Total for question 1 — **3 points**

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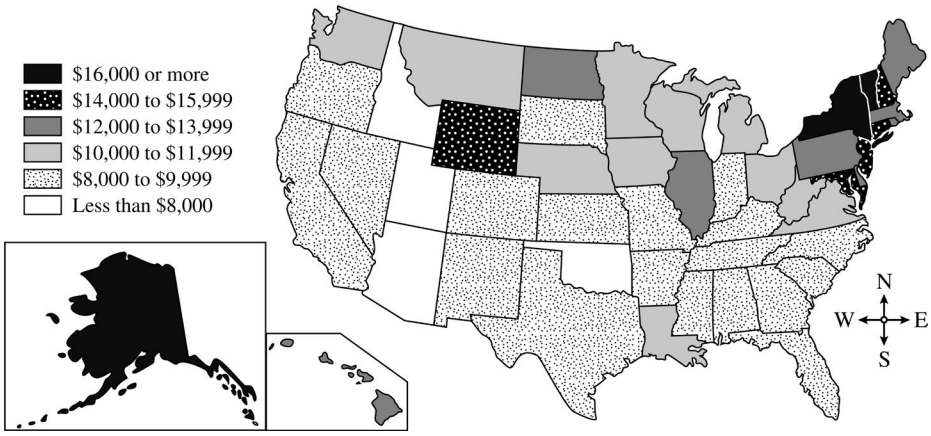
Question 2: Quantitative Analysis

PUBLIC EDUCATION SPENDING: AMOUNT SPENT PER PUPIL BY STATE IN 2014



Source: FairVote. www.census.gov

Use the information graphic to answer the questions.

(A) Identify the most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast.

(B) Describe a similarity or difference in public education spending by state or region, as illustrated in the information graphic.

(C) Draw a conclusion about that similarity or difference in public education spending by state or region illustrated in the information graphic.

(D) Explain how public education spending as shown in the information graphic demonstrates the principle of federalism.

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Scoring Guideline for Question 2: Quantitative Analysis — 4 points

Learning Objectives: LO 1.7.A

(A) Identify the most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast. — **1 point** — 3.A

- $8,000-$9,999

(B) Describe a similarity or difference in public education spending by state or region, as illustrated in the information graphic. — **1 point** — 3.B

Acceptable descriptions include:

- The Northeast region of the United States spends the highest amount of money on public education than any other region in the U.S.
- Southern states spend much less per student on public education than the Northeast states.

(C) Draw a conclusion about that similarity or difference in public education spending by state or region illustrated in the information graphic. — **1 point** — 3.C

Acceptable conclusions include:

- One possible conclusion is that Northern states are wealthier and thus can afford to spend more.
- Southern states may spend less because their priorities are not focused on public education while the Northeast values education more.

(D) Explain how public education spending as shown in the information graphic demonstrates the principle of federalism. — **1 point** — 3.D

Acceptable explanations include:

- While the national government requires states to provide education, states are permitted to create and organize their own education systems. Thus, as shown in the map all states spend money on education, but each spends a different amount per pupil.

Total for question 2 — **4 points**

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Question 3: SCOTUS Comparison

This question requires you to compare a Supreme Court case you studied in class with one you have not studied in class. A summary of the Supreme Court case you did not study in class is presented below and provides all of the information you need to know about this case to answer the prompts

In 1935, Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which among other things guaranteed workers the right to join a labor union and collectively bargain with employers. The law also established the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), an independent agency responsible for enforcing the law.

The Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation fired ten workers attempting to unionize its plant located in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania. When the National Labor Relations Board determined this to be in violation of the recently passed NLRA, the company sued claiming that labor relations had only an indirect effect on commerce, and thus Congress did not have the constitutional power to regulate it.

In the subsequent case, *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation* (1937), the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the National Labor Relations Board by a 5–4 vote, holding that the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation conducted interstate commerce and that industrial labor relations affects that commerce.

(A) Identify the constitutional clause that is common in both *United States* v. *Lopez (1995)* and *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation* (1937).

(B) Explain how the facts in *United States* v. *Lopez* led to a different holding than in *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation*.

(C) Explain how the holding in *National Labor Relations Board* v. *Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation* affected the balance of power between the states and the national government.

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Scoring Guideline for Question 3: SCOTUS Comparison — 4 points

Learning Objectives: LO 1.7.A LO 1.8.A

(A) Identify the constitutional clause that is common in both United States v. Lopez (1995) and National Labor Relations Board v. Jones (1937). — **1 point** — 2.C

- The commerce clause.

(B) Explain how the facts in *United States v. Lopez* led to a different holding than in *National Labor Relations Board v. Jones*.

Acceptable explanations include:

One point for describing relevant information about the decision in the required Supreme Court case. — **1 point** — 2.A

- In *United States v. Lopez*, the court ruled that gun possession was not an economic activity that that could be considered interstate commerce and, therefore, gun free schools zones could not be created or regulated by the national government.

OR — **OR**

Two points for correctly explaining how the facts in *United States v. Lopez* led to a different holding than in *National Labor Relations Board v. Jones*. — **2 points** — 2.C

- In United States v. Lopez, the court ruled that gun possession was not an economic activity that that could be considered interstate commerce and, therefore, gun free schools zones could not be created or regulated by the national government. In the *NLRB v. Jones case*, Congress determined that labor disputes were related to interstate commerce and that they did fall under the commerce clause and could be regulated by the national government.

OR

(C) Explain how the holding in *National Labor Relations Board v. Jones* affected the balance of power between the states and the national government. — **1 point** — 2.D

Acceptable explanations include the following:

- By granting Congress more authority to make laws under the commerce clause, and also to establish a regulatory agency to rule in labor disputes, it substantially increased the power of the federal government.
- The NLRB v. Jones case applied a very broad interpretation of what affects interstate commerce under the commerce clause. This increases the authority of Congress to make laws and establish agencies which increases the power of the federal government.

Total for question 3 — **4 points**

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Question 4: Argument Essay

Develop an argument that explains which of the three models of representative democracy—participatory, pluralist, or elite—best achieves the founders' intent for American democracy in terms of ensuring a stable government run by the people.

Use at least one piece of evidence from one of the following foundational documents:

- Brutus 1
- Federalist No. 10
- U.S. Constitution

In your response, you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
- Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of specific and relevant evidence
  - One piece of evidence must come from one of the foundational documents listed above.
  - A second piece of evidence can come from any other foundational document not used as your first piece of evidence, or it may be from your knowledge of course concepts
- Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim or thesis.
- Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation.

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Scoring Guideline for Question 4: Argument Essay — 6 points

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A **Claim/Thesis (0-1 points)** 5.A	**0 points** Does not meet the criteria for one point.	**1 point** Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: ▪ The intended claim or thesis only restates the prompt. ▪ The intended claim or thesis does not make a claim that responds to the prompt.	**Responses that earn this point:** ▪ The claim or thesis responds to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning.
	Examples that do not earn this point: **Restates the prompt** ▪ *"Three models of representative democracy—participatory, pluralist, and elite - are all ways of achieving a stable government"* **Does not respond to the prompt** ▪ *"The founders' intent for American democracy was to ensure a stable government as shown in the Constitution.*	**Examples that earn this point:** ▪ *"It is clear that the main intent of the founders best aligns with the model of elite representative democracy. The rules crafted for appointment of Congress members and the president demonstrate an elitist model of democracy for the nation"* ▪ *"The founders wanted the people to play a main role in the government and that is why the participatory model of representative democracy best describes the American political system"* ▪ *"The model that best describes the American political system is the pluralist theory of representative democracy where groups compete to make society better."*
	Additional Notes: ▪ The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. ▪ A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.	

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Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
Row B **Evidence (0-3 points)** 5.B	**0 points** Does not meet the criteria for one point.	**1 point** Provides one piece of evidence that is relevant to the topic of the prompt.	**2 points** Uses one piece of specific and relevant evidence to support the claim or thesis. **OR** Provides two pieces of evidence that are relevant to the topic of the prompt.	**3 points** Uses two pieces of specific and relevant evidence to support the claim or thesis.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
	Responses that do not earn points: ▪ Do not provide any accurate evidence ▪ Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic	**Responses that earn 1 point:** ▪ Must provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, **or** from knowledge of course concepts.	**Responses that earn 2 points:** ▪ Must provide one piece of specific and relevant evidence that supports the claim or thesis. **OR** ▪ Must provide two pieces of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. ▪ This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts.	**Responses that earn 3 points:** ▪ Must provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence **must** come from a foundational document listed in the prompt. The other piece of evidence can come from a different foundational document or from knowledge of course concepts.
	Examples that do not earn points: **Not specific** ▪ "The Federalist 10 defended the Constitution." **Not relevant to course concepts in the prompt** ▪ *"The Constitution gives Congress the power to tax."*	**Examples of evidence that are relevant to the topic of the prompt:** ▪ "The Constitution states the terms of offices and after those holding office must enter reelection" ▪ "Brutus I wanted the people to have the power warning that the Constitution would create a federal government that would possess absolute and uncontrollable power" **Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence that support the argument (1 example is one piece of evidence):** ▪ *"The elitist model intentions of the founders are further seen in the Electoral College system. In this system, the people are allowed the initial vote for president, or the 'popular vote,' which determines the composition of the electorate"* ▪ *"The Constitution includes a Bill of Rights which includes the rights/liberties of the people. This gives people an incentive to be part of the governing process"* ▪ *"The Constitution also includes several amendments that give the people more of a say in government. For example, the 17th Amendment gives the people the power to vote for their senators allowing them to participate more in the government"* ▪ *"Federalist 10 shows that the founders wanted a pluralist democracy.*		
	Additional Notes: ▪ *To earn one or two points in Row B, the response does not need to have earned the point for claim/thesis in Row A.* ▪ *To earn three points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim/thesis (earned the point in Row A)* ▪ *To earn three points in Row B, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt*			

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<tr><th>Reporting Category</th><th colspan="2">Scoring Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5">Row C
Reasoning (0-1 points)
5.C</td><td>0 points
Does not meet the criteria for one point.</td><td>1 point
Uses reasoning (classification, process, causation or comparison) to explain how or why the evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Responses that do not earn this point:
Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to an argument
Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports an argument</td><td>Responses that earn this point:
Must explain the relationship between the evidence provided and an argument</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Examples of reasoning that explain how evidence supports the claim or thesis:
“However the actual vote for president is left to a small number of individuals (electors) who cast the final ballots rather than just using the popular vote, mirroring the philosophies of the elite model”
“All of these amendments to the Constitution allowed the people to participate more in government demonstrating that the founders wanted the public to be involved in their government”
“This is a prime example of how pluralism is the best representation of American democracy because there are factions like political parties in the government, but they allow everyone’s voice to be heard”</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Additional Notes:
To earn this point, the response must have provided at least one piece of specific and relevant evidence.
The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and a well reasoned argument relevant to the prompt is sufficient to earn this point.</td></tr>
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<tr><th>Reporting Category</th><th colspan="2">Scoring Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Row D
Responds to Alternate Perspectives (0-1 points)
5.D</td><td>0 points
Does not meet the criteria for one point.</td><td>1 point
Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>Responses that do not earn this point:
Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis
May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not rebut or refute that perspective
Rebut or refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective</td><td>Responses that earn this point:
Must describe an alternate perspective AND rebut or refute that perspective</td></tr>
<tr><td>Examples of responses that do not earn the point:
Restates the opposite of the claim or thesis
“Those who argue that the founders wanted an elite mode of democracy are incorrect because it is clear they wanted a participatory system”
Describes an alternate perspective but does not rebut or refute that perspective
“Although it is obvious that the elite model of democracy is what the founders intended, some argue that the founders actually wanted a participatory system of democracy in order to give the people authority over the government”</td><td>Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include:
“Advocates of the participatory theory may argue that citizens have the power to participate by voting in elections in the United States. However, the founders designed a government which allowed for representation of the people, while leaving the more complex and important decisions to a well-educated few, as demonstrated by the systems of elections for both senators and the president”
“A counter argument is that the elite model is the best. This is supported by the United States Constitution, which gives the most power to property holding, wealthy, white males. This does not best reflect the founders’ intent because the founders wanted the people, the citizens, in the United States to be in control. This is not possible with the elitist theory because only the wealthy have any say in the government under the elitist model, not all citizens”</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Additional Notes:
To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).
Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.</td></tr>
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