

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION STUDY GUIDE PART I: THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION

Welcome to AP Government! Attached, you will find your summer assignment for AP Government. I know that for many of you, this is your first experience with an AP class and with summer assignments, so I wanted to take a moment to explain the assignment to you. **This assignment should be completed by Friday, August 16, 2024.**

The purpose of the summer assignment is to get you excited about the course and start forming connections to content that will make the course more enriching and easier to understand. The two things that are most useful to that end, are:

- (1) an awareness of current events, and
- (2) a working knowledge of the Constitution.

The **first task** is to complete **ONE current event journal**. A detailed rubric and sample journal entry have been provided to guide you in your journals. Before you start, think about the sources that you use: are they reliable? what is their ideological (liberal/conservative) lean? Also think about: what issues or topics interest you? what would like to be more informed about? Do your best to consider neutral and moderate sources, even though all sources have some bias. To help you begin use one of the following: AllSides.com, the Associated Press, NPR, PBS News Hour, and Reuters are some of the media outlets to reference.

The **second task** is for you to look at the US Constitution, the document that serves as a blueprint for our government, to complete a simple **Constitution scavenger hunt**. The scavenger hunt is meant to help you read the Constitution and highlight key portions of the document. Some of the answers are very short; some may even be one word. You do NOT need to answer in complete sentences.

Please read the U.S. Constitution as you work through this assignment. You may also use the Constitution websites/pdf I have provided. You may write out or type your responses, but it must be your work.

Interactive Constitution:

<https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution> OR
<https://constitutioncenter.org/media/files/constitution.pdf>

If you have any questions over the summer, feel free to email me (josie_oakley@charleston.k12.sc.us) I will make a point of checking my e-mail each week. I am looking forward to a great year with all of you!

Ms. Oakley

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

AP U.S. Government & Politics Current Event Rubric

Directions: Complete one current event journals over the course of the summer. Each current event should include the following:

- At least two articles over the course of 7 days about the same topic is **ONE JOURNAL ENTRY**
- Each entry should relate to at least one of the three branches of the United States government.
- Articles should be cited in proper MLA format. You may use easy bib to help create the citation. Journal entries should be typed and follow the rubric.

An example is given for student reference.

CATEGORY	MASTERY (2)	DEVELOPING(1)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (0)
Event/ Issue Selection	The issue/event is directly related to U.S. government and/or politics and was a significant topic during the week in which the journal was written.	The issue/event is somewhat related to U.S. government and/or politics and/or may not be considered a significant topic during the week in which the journal was written.	The issue/event is unrelated to U.S. government and/or politics
Summary	Summary is in student's own words, is informative in nature, and demonstrates a proficient understanding of the event(s) or issue(s) at hand.	Summary is in student's own words, is somewhat informative, and demonstrates some understanding of the event(s) or issue(s) at hand.	Summary is either not in the student's own words, is not informative, or demonstrates little understanding of the event(s) or issue(s) at hand.

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

<p>Explanation</p>	<p>The student offers a detailed and meaningful explanation of what the article(s) taught them about our government and/or political system. The explanation goes beyond simple definitions and explains how and why our government and political system function.</p>	<p>The student offers a limited explanation of what the article(s) taught them about our government and/or political system. The explanation may focus too heavily on defining terms rather than explaining their significance.</p>	<p>Student offers no explanation of what the article(s) taught them about our government and/or political system</p>
<p>Journal Length</p>	<p>The current event journal reflects two well written paragraphs</p>	<p>The current events journal reflects one-two written paragraphs</p>	<p>The current events journal is one paragraph or less</p>
<p>Spelling, Grammar, and Syntax</p>	<p>The student commits no major errors in spelling, grammar, or syntax.</p>	<p>The student commits several errors in spelling, grammar, or syntax, but they do not interfere with the reader's ability to understand.</p>	<p>The student commits a significant number of errors in spelling, grammar, or syntax that may interfere with the reader's ability to understand</p>

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

Sample Current Events Journal

Ben Franklin

AP U.S. Government and Politics

Sample Current Events Journal for May 18-21, 2015

Political news this week was dominated by the impending 2016 presidential election. As of now, the focus is on the already large and growing field of Republican primary candidates. While several politicians have already declared their candidacy, former Florida Republican governor Jeb Bush and current Wisconsin Republican governor Scott Walker have not, although they are expected to soon. Analysts believe that they are waiting to make an official announcement so that they can continue to raise money for their super PACs (political action committees). The Supreme Court decided in *Citizens United v. FEC* that corporations are protected by the First Amendment and may spend an unlimited amount of money to support or attack a candidate, as long as they are not affiliated with the candidate. This decision gave rise to super PACs, organizations that are allowed to accept unlimited financial contributions from donors that will later be used to support a particular candidate (or attack their opponent(s)). Until they announce their candidacy, politicians such as Jeb Bush can continue to raise millions of dollars for super PACs that will later support them in the primary elections. Jeb Bush has currently raised the most money of the declared and prospective Republican candidates; he is expected to declare that he has raised “in the high tens of millions.” This war chest could prove valuable to him in a crowded Republican primary contest. The Republican field of candidates is already quite large and the Republican National Committee (RNC) anticipates that as many as twelve candidates may take part in the first primary debate.

This week’s stories demonstrate the impact of the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision and the growing influence of money in presidential elections. The amount of money that candidates need to run (and win) a presidential election is absolutely staggering, and candidates for president – as well as lower offices – are increasingly forced to spend greater amounts of time and resources raising money. In the 2012 election cycle, 7 billion dollars was spent on the presidential election alone. In the same year, the average cost of winning a Senate seat was approximately 10.5 million dollars, and the average cost of winning a seat in the House of Representatives was 1.7 million dollars. Most of this money is used to pay for electioneering communications such as television buys, radio ads, and mailers. Therefore, it is often very difficult to win an election while being outspent by an opponent. The issue of campaign finance is very controversial. Critics of *Citizens United* argue that more money means more access to politicians and candidates for the nation’s highest offices, and that the high cost of elections causes candidates to focus heavily on the nation’s wealthiest citizens. The high price tag of becoming an elected official may also exclude qualified candidates who are unable raise such large amounts of money. Supporters of *Citizens United* believe that money equates to speech, and that greater spending on elections simply means that more speech is occurring. It is unclear whether the Supreme Court foresaw the controversy

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

that would result from their *Citizens United* decision, or whether they will reconsider their decision in the future.

Bash, Dana. "Election 2016: The Dirty Little Secret of Presidential Announcement CNNPolitics.com." *CNN. Cable News Network*, 18 May 2015. Web. 19 May 2015.

Silver, Nate, and Harry Enten. "Jeb Bush Has The Cash, But Not The GOP Support." *FiveThirtyEight*. 28 Apr. 2015. Web. 19 May 2015.

Stokols, Eli. "Florida Quietly Sets up an Epic 2016 Primary Clash." *POLITICO*. Web. 19 May 2015.

Constitutional Scavenger Hunt

Directions: Using the Constitution, (an online version is available through the Constitution Center website) answer the questions below. Answers do **NOT** need to be in complete sentences.

Article I

1. What are the two parts (houses) of Congress?
2. How often are Representatives to be elected?
3. How long is the term for a senator?
4. How were senators originally chosen? Which amendment changed that? (*You may need to come back to this one!*)
5. Which legislative body has the power of impeachment and which body has the power to try an impeached official?
6. Who decides the times, places, and manner for holding elections for Congress?
7. In which house of Congress do all bills concerning taxes originate?
8. In Section 8, the Constitution lists or enumerates the powers of Congress. List four of them.
9. In Section 9, there are three limitations on the power of Congress to deny people rights. What are those three limitations? (*If you don't understand what these phrases mean, don't worry – I'll explain.*)
10. Name three limits on the powers of the states.

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

Article II

11. How old does someone have to be to be elected president?
12. How does the government determine how many electors a state has in the Electoral College?
13. Name three powers of the President. *(Any three you would like)*
14. Name the body of Congress that must approve a treaty that the president has negotiated and the fraction of the vote they must approve it by.

Article III

15. What is the term of office for Supreme Court justices? When may they be removed?
16. Who gets to decide how many federal courts we have?
17. What must be necessary to convict someone of treason?

Article IV

18. What is the topic of Article IV?
19. What does the Constitution say about how one state must regard the laws of another state?

Article V

20. What fraction of the houses of Congress is necessary to approve a proposed amendment?
21. What fraction of the states must approve a proposed amendment for it to be ratified?

Article VI

22. What does the Constitution say about which law shall predominate if there is any conflict between laws?
23. What qualification for holding any public office is forbidden?

Article VII

24. How many states had to ratify the Constitution?

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

25. According to the principle of checks and balances, each branch of the government must have control over the other branches. Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one of each type of checks and balances. Indicate where each power is listed in the Constitution.

a. A power that the executive branch has over the legislative branch: This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

b. A power that the executive branch holds over the judicial branch: This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

c. A power that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch: This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

d. A power that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch: This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

e. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch: This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

f. A power that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch: This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

PART II: IMPORTANT CLAUSES

26. Where is the Commerce Clause and what does it say?

27. Where is the Necessary and Proper Clause and what does it say?

28. Where is the Supremacy Clause and what does it say?

29. Where is the Full Faith and Credit Clause and what does it say?

30. There are two Due Process clauses. Where are they? What does Due Process of Law imply?

31. Where is the Equal Protection Clause? What does this imply?

32. Find the Taking Clause of the 5th Amendment. What does this mean?

AP Government/Politics Summer Assignment 2024-2025

PART III: THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION Some parts of the Constitution require a simple majority, others a supermajority, while still others protect citizens from the will of the majority. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, protect citizens from the will of the majority. In other words, no majority could vote to take these rights away. Read each amendment to the Constitution and answer the questions below.

33. Summarize the rights listed in the First Amendment. What important clauses are included? Why could these rights be considered “fundamental” to US Citizens?
34. Which amendment extended the vote to 18-year-olds?
35. Which amendment deals with the issue of citizenship, due process, and equal protection? Why might this amendment be foundational to an individual's rights?
36. Which amendment said states couldn't prevent people from voting based on race?
37. Which amendment said a person couldn't be tried twice for the same crime?
38. What phrase is repeated in both the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments?
39. List three rights the accused has when suspected of a crime.
40. Which amendment gave women the right to vote and in what year was it passed?
41. Which amendment decided a person could be president for only two terms?
42. Which amendment outlines the line of succession for the presidency?