

Advanced Placement Government and Politics

Summer Assignment 2026

Welcome to AP Government and Politics!

Congratulations on enrolling in **Advanced Placement Government and Politics** for the 2026–2027 school year. This course is designed to challenge you to think critically about the foundations, institutions, and processes of American government while preparing you for the AP Exam in May.

Your summer assignment will introduce you to the foundational documents, constitutional principles, and political ideas that are essential for success in this course. Completing this assignment carefully and thoughtfully will give you a strong start for the school year.

Instructor Information

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Assignment Due Date: Friday, August 7, 2026

Assignments should be completed neatly and thoroughly.

Summer Assignment Goals

By completing this assignment, students will:

- Build familiarity with foundational American government documents
- Develop analytical and critical-thinking skills
- Strengthen understanding of constitutional principles
- Prepare for AP-style discussion, writing, and assessments
- Begin developing the vocabulary and background knowledge required for the AP Exam

Important Reminder

This is an **Advanced Placement** course. Students are expected to complete all assignments independently and honestly.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted should reflect your own thinking and effort. Responses copied from other students, websites, or AI-generated sources violate classroom expectations and school honor policies.

“The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter.” — Dwight D. Eisenhower

Part 1: Required Foundational Documents for this Course

- Declaration of Independence
- Articles of Confederation
- The United States Constitution/The Bill of Rights/Constitutional Amendments
- Federalist No. 10
- Brutus No. 1
- Federalist No. 51
- Federalist No. 70
- Federalist No. 78
- Letter from Birmingham Jail

Instructions: For EACH required foundational document:

1. Watch the corresponding Heimler's History AP Government video on YouTube.
2. Answer the guided questions completely.
3. Use complete sentences unless otherwise directed.

1. Declaration of Independence

1. Who was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence?
2. What historical event led to the writing of the Declaration?
3. Which Enlightenment thinker most influenced the document?
4. Define "natural rights."
5. What does "consent of the governed" mean?
6. According to the Declaration, when do citizens have the right to alter or abolish government?
7. What complaints did the colonists have against King George III?
8. Explain the idea of the social contract.

2. Articles of Confederation

1. Why were the Articles of Confederation created?
2. Why did Americans fear a strong national government after independence?
3. What powers did Congress have under the Articles?
4. What major powers were missing from the national government?
5. Why was it difficult for Congress to pass laws?
6. Why was it difficult to amend the Articles?
7. What was Shays' Rebellion?
8. Why did Shays' Rebellion expose weaknesses in the Articles?
9. Identify one strength of the Articles.
10. Identify three weaknesses of the Articles.
11. Why did the Articles eventually fail?

12. How did the Articles influence the Constitution?

3. The Constitution & Bill of Rights

1. Why was the Constitutional Convention called?

2. What compromises were necessary to create the Constitution?

3. Compare the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan.

4. Explain the Great Compromise.

5. Explain the Three-Fifths Compromise.

6. Define the following principles:

- Popular sovereignty

- Federalism

- Separation of powers

- Checks and balances

- Republicanism

- Limited government

7. What powers are granted to Congress in Article I?

8. What powers are granted to the president in Article II?

9. What powers are granted to the judiciary in Article III?

10. Why did Anti-Federalists oppose ratification?

11. Why was the Bill of Rights added?

12. Which amendments protect civil liberties?

13. Explain the importance of:

- First Amendment
- Second Amendment
- Fourth Amendment
- Fifth Amendment

- Sixth Amendment

- Fourteenth Amendment

14. What is due process?

15. What is selective incorporation?

16. Why is the Fourteenth Amendment one of the most important amendments?

17. Why is the Constitution considered a “living document”?

4. Federalist No. 10

1. Who wrote Federalist No. 10?

2. What is a faction?

3. Why did Madison believe factions were unavoidable?

4. Why are factions dangerous in democracy?

5. What are the two methods for dealing with factions?

6. Why did Madison reject removing the causes of factions?
7. How does a large republic control factions better than a small democracy?
8. Why did Madison support representative democracy?

5. Brutus No. 1

1. Was Brutus a Federalist or Anti-Federalist?
2. Why did Brutus oppose the Constitution?
3. Why did Brutus believe a large republic would fail?
4. What concerns did Brutus have about the Necessary and Proper Clause?
5. What concerns did Brutus have about the Supremacy Clause?
6. Why did Brutus fear the national government would overpower the states?
7. What concerns did Brutus have about the judiciary?
8. Why did Brutus believe representatives would become disconnected from citizens?

6. Federalist No. 51

1. Who wrote Federalist No. 51?
2. Why did Madison believe government was necessary?
3. Explain the phrase: "If men were angels, no government would be necessary."
4. What is separation of powers?
5. What are checks and balances?
6. How does the Constitution prevent tyranny?
7. How does federalism divide power?
8. Why did Madison believe ambition should counteract ambition?
9. Which branch did Madison believe would be the strongest?

7. Federalist No. 70

1. Who wrote Federalist No. 70?
2. Why did Hamilton support a single executive?

3. What did Hamilton mean by “energy in the executive”?
4. Why would multiple executives weaken government?
5. How does a single executive increase accountability?
6. Why is decisiveness important in leadership?
7. What fears existed about a strong executive?
8. How does the Constitution limit presidential power?

8. Federalist No. 78

1. Who wrote Federalist No. 78?
2. Why did Hamilton call the judiciary the “least dangerous branch”?
3. What is judicial review?
4. How does judicial review strengthen the Supreme Court?
5. Why are lifetime appointments important for judges?

6. What is judicial independence?
7. Why must courts defend the Constitution?
8. How did Marbury v. Madison connect to Federalist No. 78?
9. Why is an independent judiciary important?

9. Letter from Birmingham Jail

1. Who wrote Letter from Birmingham Jail?
2. Why was Martin Luther King Jr. in jail?
3. Who was King responding to in the letter?
4. Explain the difference between just and unjust laws.
5. Why did King defend civil disobedience?
6. Why did King criticize white moderates?
7. What role did nonviolent protest play in the Civil Rights Movement?

Part 2: Required Supreme Court Cases Worksheet

Instructions:

AP College Board will require you to know these 14 cases for the exam. For each of the **required Supreme Court cases**, research and complete the following case briefs sheets. Be sure to provide specific details that reflect your understanding of each case's significance to American constitutional law and politics. Oyez.com is a great resource to help with this assignment. **Heimler's AP Government videos** also are an excellent way to learn about the cases and get the information you need. He breaks down and explains the information needed for the attached case briefs.

Case List (Check off as you complete each one):

Required Case

Marbury v. Madison (1803)

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

Schenck v. U.S. (1919)

Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)

Shaw v. Reno (1993)

McDonald v. Chicago (2010)

Required Case

Baker v. Carr (1962)

Engel v. Vitale (1962)


Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)

New York Times Co. v. U.S. (1971)

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

U.S. v. Lopez (1995)

Citizens United v. FEC (2010)

 **Supreme Court Case:** _____

1. Year of Decision: _____

2. Facts of the Case (Brief Summary):
(Who was involved? What happened?)

3. Constitutional Issue/Question(s):
(Which part of the Constitution was involved? What rights or powers were being debated?)

4. Decision of the Court (Majority Opinion):
(What did the Court decide and why?)

5. Dissenting Opinion (if applicable):
(What did the dissent argue?)

6. Importance/Impact on U.S. Government or Politics:
(Why does this case matter? How did it shape constitutional law, civil liberties, or government powers?)

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Part 3: In-depth study of the U.S. Constitution.

Directions: Read the U.S. Constitution and complete the following questions directly on this handout. Answers must be **HANDWRITEN**

A link to the US Constitution can be found [here \(https://constitutionus.com/\)](https://constitutionus.com/)

Be sure to identify the location of each answer in the Constitution (example: Article I, Section 3)

Part I: THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. Read each article of the Constitution. Summarize the general purpose or subject of each article in one sentence in the chart below. Do not just copy down each Article.

Article I	
Article II	
Article III	
Article IV	
Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	

2. Identify two powers denied to Congress in the Constitution. ****Don't forget to list where each power is found in the Constitution!****

3. How does the House of Representatives determine the rules of proceedings (the ability to have debates, amendments, etc.)? ****Don't forget to list where it is found in the Constitution!****

4. Identify two powers the Constitution denies to the States. ****Don't forget to list where each power is found in the Constitution!****

5.

Constitutional eligibility requirements (also known as formal requirements) **Don't forget to list where each power is found in the Constitution!**		
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES	SENATE	PRESIDENT

6. The powers of the Constitution that are specifically granted to the branches of government or two office holder are called expressed powers. **Don't forget to list where each power is found in the Constitution!**

a. Identify two expressed powers of the president.

b. What are the expressed powers of the vice president?

c. Identify two expressed powers of Congress.

7. 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. **Don't forget to list where it is found in the Constitution!**

a. A power that the executive branch has over the legislative branch.

b. A power that the executive branch has over the judicial branch.

c. A power that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch.

d. A power that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch.

e. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch.

f. A power that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch.

8. The court of original jurisdiction is the first court that hears a case. Appellate courts hear cases on appeal from lower courts. Although the Supreme Court functions primarily as an appellate court, it is the court of original jurisdiction in certain kinds of cases. What are those? ****Don't forget to list where it is found in the Constitution!****

9. According to Article I of the Constitution, who has the power to declare war?

10. What power does the Constitution give the President in the area of war?

Part II: IMPORTANT CLAUSES

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

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

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

4. How might these clauses above have impacted the power of the federal government?

5. Where is the habeas corpus clause and what does it say?

6. What is habeas corpus?

7. Where are bills of attainders discussed and what does it say?

8. What is a bill of attainder?

9. Where are ex post facto laws discussed and what does it say?

10. What is an ex post facto law?

11. Where is the full faith and credit clause and what does it say?

12. There are two "due process" clauses. Where are they? What does "due process" of law imply?

13. Where is the "equal protection clause?" What does this imply?

Part III: CHECKS AND BALANCES, FUNCTIONS OF BRANCHES

1. Vetoes

a. What bodies have the power to override a presidential veto?

b. What margin is required to override a presidential veto?

c. Where in the Constitution is the veto power described?

2. Treaties

a. What body has the power to ratify treaties?

b. What margin is required to ratify treaties?

c. Where in the Constitution is the ratification power described?

3. To impeach means "to bring charges against" or "to indict".

a. What body has the power to impeach the president?

b. What vote is required to impeach?

c. What is the standard for impeachment?

d. Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described?

4. Electoral College

a. If not candidate for the presidency wins a simple majority of the total number of electoral votes, what body has the power to choose the president?

b. What margin is required to choose the president?

c. Where in the Constitution is the Electoral College described (hint: there are two parts)

5. The Constitution has comparatively little to say about the structure and composition of the Supreme Court. Identify two aspects of the Court's structure and composition that the Constitution does not specify. (The Constitution does specify these two basic aspects of structure and composition for the other two branches.)

6. What are two ways that amendments can be proposed?

7. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be ratified?

Part IV. 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 protects 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.

1. Outline the general purpose of all 27 Amendments.

Amendment 1	
Amendment 2	
Amendment 3	

Amendment 4	
Amendment 5	
Amendment 6	
Amendment 7	
Amendment 8	
Amendment 9	
Amendment 10	
Amendment 11	
Amendment 12	
Amendment 13	
Amendment 14	
Amendment 15	
Amendment 16	
Amendment 17	
Amendment 18	
Amendment 19	
Amendment 20	

Amendment 21	
Amendment 22	
Amendment 23	
Amendment 24	
Amendment 25	
Amendment 26	
Amendment 27	

1. Which amendment(s) of the Constitution protect the rights of women and how do they protect them?

2. Which amendment(s) of the Constitution protect the rights of African Americans?

3. How were U.S. Senators chosen before the 17th Amendment?

4. The 25th Amendment describes the sequence of events that would install the vice president as acting president against the will of the president. Outline that sequence of events.