

AP United States Government and Politics Summer Assignment

Mr. McNiel

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Welcome to AP U.S. Government and Politics,

This course 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. You will also engage in disciplinary practices that require you to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, you will complete a political science research or applied civics project.

The most important document we will study is The Constitution of the United States. We will reference this document throughout the course; and this will be the basis for your summer assignment. You can find a copy of The Constitution at the National Archives website - <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs>

1. Read the document thoroughly, from the beginning of the Preamble to the end of the Twenty-Seventh Amendment. Find additional commentary and explanations as needed to clarify passages you may not understand.
2. Answer all questions in this assignment on this document, adding spaces after each question as needed to provide room for your answer. Use a different color font for your answers, or highlight your answers on the hard copy turned in on the first day of class.
3. **Print and turn in a hard copy of the assignment on the first day of class.** Find your own resources to print your document and have it ready to turn in when you enter class.
4. **You will have a test over this material on the first day of class.** The test format will be multiple choice and short answer. If you miss that day, the make-up test will be all short answers.

Part I: The United States Constitution

1. Read each article of the Constitution. Summarize the general purpose or subject of each article in one complete sentence in the chart below.

ARTICLE I	
ARTICLE II	
ARTICLE III	
ARTICLE IV	
ARTICLE V	
ARTICLE VI	
ARTICLE VII	

2. Compare Article I with Article II. What are some differences between the two?
3. How does the House of Representatives determine the rules of proceedings (the ability to have debates, amendments, etc.)?

4. Identify two powers the Constitution prohibits from the States.
5. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the House?
6. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the Senate?
7. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for the President?
8. The powers of the Constitution that are specifically granted to the branches of government or office holders are called expressed powers.
 - 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.
9. According to the principle of checks and balances, each branch of government has the power to limit the actions of the other branches. Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one example of each check listed in the chart below. Then identify where each power is listed in the Constitution.

	Example	Article/Section of the Constitution
A power that the executive branch has over the legislative branch		
A power that the executive branch has over the judicial branch		
A power that the legislative branch has over the executive branch		
A power that the legislative branch has over the judicial branch		
A power that the judicial branch has over the executive branch		
A power that the judicial branch has over the legislative branch		

10. 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 cases?
11. According to Article I of the Constitution, who has the power to declare war?
12. 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. What is meant by habeas corpus?
5. What article/clause provides this right?
6. Where are bills of attainder discussed?
7. What is a bill of attainder?
8. Where are ex post facto laws discussed?
9. What is an ex post facto law? Give an example.
10. Where is the full faith and credit clause and what does it say?
11. Where is the reserved powers clause? What does it mean? Give an example.
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 it imply?

Part III: Majority and Supermajority

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 a treaty?
 - c. Where in the Constitution is the ratification power described?

3. To impeach means “to bring charges against” or “to indict”
 - a. What body of government has the power to impeach the president?
 - b. What vote is required to impeach?
 - c. What is the process for impeachment?
 - d. Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described?
 - e. How many presidents have been impeached? Name them.
 - f. Following impeachment, what must happen next in order to remove a president from office?

4. Presidential Elections
 - a. Where in the Constitution is the Electoral College described? (Hint: there are 2 parts)
 - b. What margin of the Electoral College vote is required for a candidate to win the presidency? Based on this answer, how many Electoral College votes are required to win?
 - c. If no candidate for the presidency wins the Electoral College vote, what body has the power to choose the president?
 - d. How many presidents have been elected by the Electoral College, yet failed to gain a nationwide majority of the popular vote? Name the presidents, and the year elected.
 - e. On what day, and in which specific election will you be eligible to vote for the first time?

5. The Constitution specifies a three-fourths majority for just one process. What process is it?

6. How many courts were created by the Constitution?

7. 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.)

8. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be proposed?

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

Part IV: The Amendments to the Constitution

Read each amendment to the Constitution and answer the questions below.

1. Outline the general purpose of all 27 Amendments:

AMENDMENT I	
AMENDMENT II	
AMENDMENT III	
AMENDMENT IV	

AMENDMENT V	
AMENDMENT VI	
AMENDMENT VII	
AMENDMENT VIII	
AMENDMENT IX	
AMENDMENT X	
AMENDMENT XI	
AMENDMENT XII	
AMENDMENT XIII	
AMENDMENT XIV	
AMENDMENT XV	
AMENDMENT XVI	
AMENDMENT XVII	
AMENDMENT XVIII	
AMENDMENT XIX	
AMENDMENT XX	
AMENDMENT XXI	
AMENDMENT XXII	
AMENDMENT XXIII	
AMENDMENT XXIV	
AMENDMENT XXV	
AMENDMENT XXVI	
AMENDMENT XXVII	

2. Which amendment(s) to the Constitution protect the rights of women?

3. Which amendment(s) to the Constitution protect the rights of racial minorities?

4. How were US Senators chosen before the Seventeenth Amendment?
5. The Twenty-Fifth Amendment describes the sequence of events that would install the vice-president as acting president. Outline that sequence of events.
6. List the offices in the line of succession to the presidency.
7. When was this line of succession established? Why?