

# AP U.S. Government & Politics Summer Assignment 2018



Dear Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics Student,

Welcome to Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics! We are so pleased you have elected to enroll in this class and we hope next year's course will open your eyes and ears to our governmental system, political environment and your presumed role in it. Next year will be an exciting year for you all, not only because it will be your senior year, but because it promises to be a very heated midterm election season. In the fall, we will engage in learning activities surrounding the local, state and federal elections in November.

According to the College Board's course description,

“Advanced Placement 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. [Students] will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, [students] will complete a political science research or applied civics project.”

The College Board has recently redesigned the course curriculum framework and exam with the help of many stakeholders including AP teachers, higher education faculty as well as the public at-large and experts from across the political spectrum. This course will require all of us to push ourselves to do our best work, not just enough to “skate by”. Independent reading and current events analysis is essential to succeeding in the AP U.S. Government & Politics course.

We are not big fans of “busy work”. Our summer assignment will require you to become an informed and engaged citizen participant. Many of you may not currently read national newspapers like the *New York Times* or news magazines such as *Newsweek* or *US News and World Report*. You may not even watch nightly news television programs on CBS, ABC, CNN or Fox News. This must change immediately for you to be fully prepared for our class. If you haven't yet done these things on a regular basis, don't panic, there will be time for you to get up to speed. You only need to have the desire to want to learn about our government and political system. With that desire, we as a team will work towards our common goal of improving our democracy by creating a more informed populace.

Enjoy your summer and stay engaged in terms of what is happening in our country and world. If you have any questions regarding the summer assignment on the next page, please do not hesitate emailing us. The summer assignment will be due on **Friday, September 14, 2018.**

Best Regards,

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# Current Events Journal

## Big Ideas in AP U.S. Government and Politics (Adapted from new College Board Framework):

The big ideas described below are intended to illustrate distinctive features and processes in U.S. government and politics as well as how political scientists study political behavior.

<b>Constitutionalism (CON):</b> The U.S. Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances among the branches of the central government and allocates power between federal and state governments through federalism. This system is based on the rule of law and the balance of majority rule and minority rights.	
<b>Liberty and Order (LOR):</b> Governmental laws and policies balancing order and liberty are based on the U.S. Constitution and have been interpreted differently over time.	<b>Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD):</b> Popular sovereignty, individualism, and republicanism are important considerations of U.S. laws and policy making and assume citizens will engage and participate.
<b>Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI):</b> Multiple actors and institutions within the government and society interact to produce and implement possible policies including political parties, average citizens and lobbyist groups.	<b>Methods of Political Analysis (MPA):</b> 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.

### Task:

Students are to follow current events over the summer and get a head start on understanding how the U.S. government/political system operates. Students will need to select a total of **three news articles from three separate weeks over the summer**, and **write a 1 single-spaced page reflection for each article using 12pt. Times New Roman font (a total of 3 pages)**.

- Students should look for articles from different sources that emphasize any **ONE of the following constitutional principles/concepts**: federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, elastic clause, supremacy clause and commerce clause.
- The articles can **focus on any of the following topics**: the Congress, the Supreme Court, the President, a government agency, foreign policy, domestic policy, homeland security, immigration, taxes, healthcare reform, education, judicial/cabinet appointments, economic policy, interest/lobbyist groups, political parties, and/or midterm election issues. (This is not an inclusive list.)

Each current events reflection **MUST** include:

- A brief summary of the article.
- The impact of this event/decision on the US government and populace.
- The possible consequences of this event/decision (positive, negative or neutral).
- A clear connection to **AT LEAST 1 of the constitutional principles/concepts** listed above.
- An evaluation of bias, if any, in the article.

Students must clearly address each item above in their reflection. Students need to include a citation in **Chicago Style/Turabian format** at the end of each reflection. Students must pay attention to the date of the article as the articles must be from **three different weeks** over the summer. (IE. 1 article from July 12, 1 article from July 28, and 1 article from August 13). Remember the goal of the summer assignment is to better understand how our governmental system operates, so keep that in mind when selecting articles.

*Happy Reading and Writing!*