

AP U.S Government and Politics Summer Assignment

During the course of the summer, keep a current events journal on government/politics. You will type a minimum of two paragraphs (complete sentences; ~300 words) about the major event or events in American government and/or politics from the past summer. You will have a total of **3 political current events** from the summer that you will turn in on a google doc.

Directions: (create on a google doc)

1. Type a minimum of two paragraphs (complete sentences; ~300 words) about **one major** event in American government and/or politics. **You will need to include a minimum of 3 total entries.**
2. In the **first paragraph**, you will describe the event or events with specific details such as date, location/region, people/countries involved, and other important information. (summary)
3. In the **second paragraph**, you will analyze the significance of the event/events and state any opinions, thoughts, or additional analysis you might have about the event(s). This is not an ADDITIONAL summary, this is you making connections with current events and the role of government. (reflection). You may need to do some research about government to be able to relate to the current event and reflect on it.
4. Be sure to include the **date and link** to the news source at the bottom of each entry.

NOTE: There is a sample current event below.

Sample Current Events Journal

Sally Student

AP U.S. Government and Politics

Mr. Mees

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 (the Democratic Party is expected to nominate Hilary Clinton without significant opposition). 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. 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 show 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 serves to increase the influence of corporations and the most affluent Americans who are able to make large campaign contributions. The actions of Jeb Bush and Scott Walker, as well as the other declared candidates who are traversing the country fundraising, show that wooing donors and raising cash has become more important than addressing the concerns of everyday Americans. More money means more access to politicians and candidates for the nation’s highest offices. In turn, wealthy donors could pressure politicians to support policies that will result in making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Meanwhile, working class Americans who cannot afford to make large campaign contributions are left without a voice in the political process. The high price tag of becoming president may also exclude qualified candidates who are unable raise such large amounts of money. It is unclear whether the Supreme Court foresaw these negative outcomes when they made their *Citizens United* decision. The Federal Elections Commission and the U.S. government should seriously consider passing regulations and legislation to limit the amount of money that can be spent in a presidential campaign to even the playing field and allow the candidates to focus on the issues that affect the American people.

Source: 4/28/15 <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/jeb-bush-has-the-cash-but-not-the-gop-support/>

1. **Read** either the print or online version of a major NATIONAL newspaper. Acceptable newspapers: USA Today, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the LA Times (not national but widely circulated).
2. **Watch** a national/international news broadcast (CNN, MSNBC, FOX News, PBS NewsHour, ABC, CBS, NBC, BBC America, Headline News)
3. **Read** major news magazines or political journals (Time, Newsweek, US News & World Reports, The Economist, The Atlantic, The New Yorker, The Week)

4. **Read** articles from online political journalism websites such as Politico, NewsMax, Breitbart, The Hill, DailyKos, DrudgeReport, HuffingtonPost, The Christian Science Monitor, The Weekly Standard, The Federalist, Daily Wire
 5. **Watch** daily or weekly news/current affairs programming (Hardball, Meet the Press, FOX News Sunday, The Lead with Jake Tapper) *Be very careful and get parental permission if choosing to watch shows like The Colbert Report, The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, or The Week in Review with John Oliver as these shows can contain STRONG language.*
5. **Write:**
1. Type a minimum of two paragraphs (complete sentences; ~300 words) about **one major** event in American government and/or politics from that week. **You will need to include a minimum of 3 total entries.**
 2. In the **first paragraph**, you will describe the event or events with specific details such as date, location/region, people/countries involved, and other important information. (summary)
 3. In the **second paragraph**, you will analyze the significance of the event/events and state any opinions, thoughts, or additional analysis you might have about the event(s). This is not an ADDITIONAL summary, this is you making connections with current events and the role of government. (reflection). You may need to do some research about government to be able to relate to the current event and reflect on it.