

## Primer Packet – Government Basics

Understanding the following topics and concepts—prior to entering the course—can help a student “start strong” in AP Government by being comfortable with “the basics.”

### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Packet must be **completed fully**, with questions **answered specifically**.
2. For EVERY QUESTION students **must cite the sources** they used (specific website, book/author)

*The might be an “opening day quiz” on these topics, so be sure you use these questions to make **yourself comfortable** with some basic government concepts. (Don’t just fill it out and forget it.)*

### Part One – Helpful Graphics

This information can be found in with a targeted web search. \*Citing ALL sources is required

1. *To have a basic understanding of the different LEVELS of government in the U.S. (also known as Federalism), create a graphic that shows the names of:*
  - a. **your STATE Senators and Representatives** (or Assemblyman, etc.)
  - b. **your STATE Governor**
  - c. **your US Senators and Representatives** (including what **Congressional District** you live in)

*\*Bonus if you can also include the top government positions in **your** town!*

2. *To have a basic understanding of FEDERAL government structure, create a chart or graphic that correctly represents the three principle branches of the **federal government** including:*
  - a. both **houses of Congress**,
  - b. the top **levels of the executive branch** (president, the Cabinet, etc.)
  - c. the **levels of the judicial branch** (District Courts, Courts of Appeals, The Supreme Court).
3. *To understand how which candidates end up in ELECTIONS, create a graphic that shows the difference between **Primary Elections** and **General Elections**.*

## Part Two – Questions to Give You a “Head Start”

*This information can be found in the course textbook, most AP prep books, or with a targeted web search.*

*\*Citing ALL sources is required*

1. *To better understand the three levels of government in the U.S., provide an example of:*
  - a. a **local law** from **your** town (sometimes called a **civic ordinance**) that might affect **you** personally,
  - b. an “atypical”, or even strange, **state law** from **your** state (something more interesting than murder, theft, etc.)
  - c. a **federal law** that **you think** is unfair, or that **you don’t agree** with.
2. *To better understand that the “executive branch” isn’t just the President and their Cabinet:*
  - a. Look up the “**Independent Agencies in the Federal Bureaucracy**,” and pick the one you think deals most closely with the things you care about.
3. *To better understand how things REALLY work in Congress:*
  - a. explain the difference between “**the Majority**” party in Congress, and “**the Minority**” party,
  - b. note **which party currently** is in the Majority (in *both* the House and Senate)
  - c. describe two important **advantages** that come from being in the Majority party.
4. *To better understand how things REALLY work in Congress:*
  - a. list the *all* **Congressional Leadership** positions (in *both* the House or the Senate),
  - b. provide the names of the politicians currently in those positions,
  - c. pick which leadership position **you would choose** if you could, and explain **your choice**.
5. *To better understand how things REALLY work in Congress:*
  - a. describe what a **Congressional Committee** is (in *either* the House or the Senate),
  - b. explain what a Congressional Committee can do,
  - c. pick a Committee (House or Senate) that **you might choose** to be in if you were in Congress, and explain **your choice**.
6. *To better understand the importance of the Supreme Court, choose one famous **Supreme Court Decision**, and explain why **you personally believe** it is important for the country.*