

AP United States Government and Politics Pre-Course Activity, Summer 2021

The AP Government students are expected to complete the Constitution Packet before the first day of school. Reading the United States Constitution and understanding its fundamental principles BEFORE class begins will give us the strong foundation from which we will build this course. As AP Gov is only a semester class this early work will enable us to begin our course content from the first day of school, giving us more time to delve deeply into our study of government.

Please print a copy of the document, using the website at the top of the first page to guide you in discovering your answers. As an AP student, you should strive to do your own work, complete answers thoughtfully, and have the work completed on time. Bring the assignment to the first day that your class meets to avoid a late work penalty. Students enrolling after one week prior to the start of school can work out a due date with Mr. Sample.

Government**THE US CONSTITUTION**Available at: www.constitutioncenter.org

Directions: Read the US Constitution and complete the following questions directly on this handout. Be specific and take your time to think about the language of the document.

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.

Article I	
Article II	
Article III	

Article IV	
Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	

2. Compare Article I with Article II. Which article is longer and more detailed?

3. Identify two powers denied from Congress in the Constitution.

4. How does the House of Representatives determine the rules of proceedings (the ability to have debates, riders, etc)?

5. Identify two powers the Constitution prohibits from the States.

6. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the House?

7. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the Senate?

8. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for the President?

9. The powers of the Constitution that are specifically granted to the branches of government or to 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.

10. 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. Indicate where each power is listed in the Constitution.

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

This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution _____

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

This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution _____

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

This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution _____

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

This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution _____

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

This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution _____
f. A power that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch. _____

This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution _____

11. 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 courts of original jurisdiction in certain kinds of cases. What are those?

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

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

PART III. "MAJORITY" AND "SUPERMAJORITY"

The Constitution requires a simple majority for some actions and a supermajority for others. A simple majority means *more than half*, while supermajority requirements can involve a 2/3 majority or a 3/4 majority. Most elections in the United States require a plurality, or the most votes, but not necessarily a majority.

1. a. What body has 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. 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? _____

4. a. What body has the power to convict the president of charges brought against him in the impeachment process and thereby remove him from the presidency? _____
b. What vote is required to convict and remove a president? _____
c. Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described? _____

5. a. What body has the power to accept or reject a president's nominations to the Supreme Court? _____
b. What margins is required to elevate a president's nominee to a seat on the Court? _____
c. Where in the Constitution are judicial nominations described? _____
d. What words are used to describe the role of the Senate in Supreme Court nominations?

6. a. If no 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)

7. The Constitution specifies a three-fourths majority for just one process. What?

8. 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). _____
9. List all parts of the Constitution that require a supermajority. For each, explain why you believe there is a supermajority requirement. _____

10. See Article VI. Explain the supremacy clause in your own words. _____
11. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be *proposed*? _____
12. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be *ratified*? _____

Part III. 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 protect 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 (give detail)	

Amendment 6 (give detail)	
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	

13. Which amendment of the Constitution specifically protects the rights of women? _____

14. Summarize what this amendment(s) of the Constitution says _____

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

16. Summarize what this part(s) of the Constitution says. _____

17. How were US Senators chosen before the Seventeenth Amendment? _____

18. Identify by number amendments that

a. Extended individual rights (at least 5) _____

b. Extended civil rights (including voting rights) (at least 4) _____

c. Prohibited certain practices by states (at least 5) _____

d. Changed specific language in the Constitution (at least 5) _____

19. The Twenty-Fifth 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.

20. How many times is the word *privacy* mentioned in the Constitution (articles and amendments) _____?

21. Identify two terms in the Constitution that you do not understand. Look up the meanings of the terms and define them here. (Resource – www.Bartleby.com)

22. What was the date of the final ratification of the Constitution?

23. Which was the last state to ratify the Constitution? What was the date?

24. Which was the first state to ratify the Constitution? _____

25. When was the 27th Amendment first introduced? How long did it take to have it ratified by the required number of states? _____