

AP GOVERNMENT SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT 2021

Book: *The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation* by Jonathan Hennessey and Aaron McConnell

Teacher Note: Hi everyone, my name is Mr. O'Neill, but everyone just calls me 'Coach', so feel free to as well. I will be your teacher next school year for AP Gov, and will look forward to meeting you all. The above-mentioned book is an easy to read guide on how the *U.S. Constitution* serves as the blueprint for how the country is governed, etc. so I hope you enjoy the read.

If you have any questions you may contact me after August 2nd at:
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Assignment: The *United States Constitution* is at the heart of our country's government and an understanding of the *Constitution* is central to a course in American Government/Politics. Therefore, in conjunction with your reading of *The United States Constitution: A Graphic Adaptation*, please complete the following questions which we will review/discuss the first week back at school. Additionally, you will need access to the book for the first week of class.

THE PREAMBLE: WE THE PEOPLE – pages 4-25

1. *This book begins by describing changes that occurred in 'political philosophies' (that is, the way people view government, its powers, and its relationship to the governed) in the eighteenth century. John Locke was one of the chief proponents of a new way of thinking about government and its purpose.*

A) *What were the ideas that Locke held?*

B) *How did these ideas contrast with previous thoughts about government?*

2. *The Articles of Confederation was the first constitution in the United States and it didn't last long. This book has a fairly dismal view of them.*

A) *Why were they unsuccessful?*

B) *List three flaws that the book sees in that form of government.*

3. The post-1787 US Constitution/Government is built on three fundamental concepts: separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.

A) *Define each of these three terms:*

B) *Give an example from the U.S. government today to illustrate each of these terms.*

4. Some Examples of the ‘Articles’ from the U.S. Constitution. Below, is a selected list for you to examine, but do know that there are 7 total.

Article I – pgs. 27-52, **Legislative Branch** (Note some of the ‘Sections’ of Article I mentioned in this section)

The Senate and the House of Representatives comprise the ‘Congress of the United States’. These 2 chambers work together, but they are significantly different from each other in many aspects.

A) *Make a two-column chart, with one side labeled **House of Representatives** and the other labeled **Senate**.*

B) *Then, list characteristics of one chamber and their counterparts in the other chamber. For example, House members serve 2-year terms, Senate members serve 6-year terms. This list should include requirements for office, the term of office, number of members in each house and why that is, and any significant powers that each holds individually.*

C). *Why do we have a bicameral legislature?*

Article II – pgs. 53-64, **Executive Branch**

A) To the best of your ability, explain how the US ‘elects’ a president. You may complete this by listing the steps in order or by making a simple chart/table.

B) Make a list of the ‘powers’ granted to the President.

C) After reviewing the ‘list of powers’ granted to the President, which do you think is most important/influential? Explain why.

Article III – pgs. 65-73, **Judicial Branch**

A) Our book says that the job of the Judiciary is to “apply and interpret the law.” What does it mean to “interpret the law”?

The Greatest power that the federal courts have is the ‘power of judicial review’.

B) What is judicial review?

C) Why is it so powerful?

Article V – pgs. 78-82 **Amendments to the Constitution**

A) What is the only branch of our government involved in amending the Constitution?

B) How does a new amendment get proposed? How does it get ratified?

Finally, the Amendments! - pgs. 88 onwards -you can stop once you hit the 10th Amendment, but feel free to look at the others at least briefly.

A.) *The first 10 Amendments to the Constitution are called **The Bill of Rights**. Outline the general purpose of each of these 10 amendments:*