

## "We the People..." Summer Assignment 2021-22



Welcome to A.P. U.S. Government and Politics and the "We the People..." team! This course will prepare you for both the Advanced Placement test in May, but also involve participation in the "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution" competition. Below you will find some information about the competition and the summer assignment.

*What is the "We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution" program?*

It is a [national program sponsored by the Center for Civic Education](#) that focuses on the history and principles of the United States constitutional democratic republic. It culminates in a series of competitions involving high school students from all 50 states. The format is a [simulated congressional hearing](#). The class will be divided into 6 groups based on the 6 units in the We the People book. Each group will prepare answers to 3 different questions, present the answer to ONE of those questions in front of judges and then answer 6 minutes of follow-up questions from the judges.

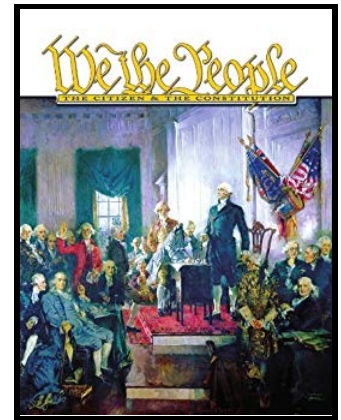
*When & where is this year's competition?*

We will be competing in the state-wide WTP competition in December 2021 at Central Connecticut State University. Winners of each State's competition compete in the finals in Washington, D.C. in April 2022. By enrolling in the course you are committing to participation in the competitions.

I have confidence that with hard-work and dedication, our team will be very successful. However, the course covers a great deal of information in a relatively short window of time. Therefore, it is imperative that we get a jumpstart over the summer on this fast-paced curriculum.

### Your tasks:

1. **Obtain a copy of the We the People textbook.** We will be using a textbook published by The Center for Civic Education that is designed specifically for the "We the People" competition. There are copies of the book available to be checked out, however, I highly recommend that you purchase your own copy so that you can freely write in it and mark it up. [You can find very inexpensive used copies on Amazon.com for purchase.](#)



2. **Read Units 1-2 in We the People textbook.** You will be reading Units 1 and 2 of the We the People textbook over the summer. **Complete the questions in the following [document](#).** You should upload your answers to the questions on [www.turnitin.com](#) (see registration information below). This is due at 7:30am on the first day of school. Your answers should be thoughtful and thorough. (40 points).

3. **Outline The Constitution.** At the foundation of our political system is the U.S. Constitution – a document that you will need to be intimately familiar with over the course of the year. By actually doing a close reading of the Constitution our hope is that you will start the year with a solid baseline knowledge of this important document. Your first task is to outline the United States Constitution and its amendments. Begin with the preamble and then cover the constitution article by article, section by section, and paragraph by paragraph. You are allowed to use abbreviations and *it should be in your own words*. As subsequent amendments cancel out earlier portions of the constitution, the portion should be crossed out with a single line with a footnote denoting which amendment changed this (see exemplar). You do NOT have to summarize/outline the last section of an amendment when it simply deals with the ratification/enforcement of the amendment.

Recommended book: *Words We Live By*, Linda Monk. **Your outline will be uploaded to [www.turnitin.com](#) by 7:30am on the first day of school.** (25 points)

**Exemplar:**

III. ARTICLE II

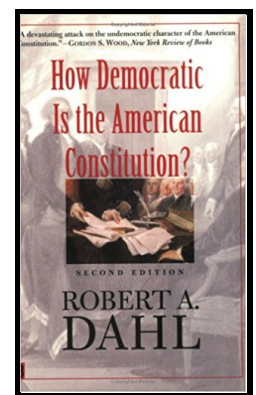
A. Section 1

1. The executive power is vested in a President with terms of 4 years, co-run with a vice president.
2. # of Electors per state is equal to the number of Senators and Representatives.
3. ~~Electors vote for the presidency, and majority wins. However, if there is a tie, the House of Reps. chooses the president. The candidate with the most elector votes is elected Vice President.~~<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Changed by 12th Amendment

4. **Read How Democratic Is the American Constitution?** Once you have completed the outline of the Constitution you can start reading Robert Dahl's How Democratic is the American Constitution? Written by a preeminent political scientist, it is an analysis of our U.S. Constitution. It will provide you with insight into the document and force you to think critically about a document that is largely venerated by the American population.

Although How Democratic Is the American Constitution? is a short book, it is a dense, in-depth analysis of the Constitution, which will require focus, research and time. It is very important for you to actively read the book by taking meaningful notes and making annotations throughout the text. You have two choices for accessing the book:



1. Check out a copy of the book from the social studies office (2035)
2. Order a hard copy from a local bookstore or online. I highly recommend this option so that you can freely write in it and mark it up.

5. **Oral Assessment.** **During the first week of school you will be tested on your understanding of the book.** The format will be an individual conference with the teacher since being able to formulate an argument orally is an important skill for this course and as a student generally. (25 points)

Individual Conference Format:

1. **5 minutes:** the timer will begin once I finish reading the first question. Once the timer goes off, time is up. The timer will be visible to every student.
2. **5 questions:** every student will be provided a unique series of questions. The amount of time you choose to spend on each question is entirely up to you.
3. **Individual:** students will privately conference with their teacher away from earshot of their classmates.

**Example:** *Does Dahl support an Aristotle or democratic republic? Cite evidence from the text to support your claim.*

What you may bring to the oral assessment:

1. **Handwritten notes** with your name written in ink on the top right corner of every page
2. Your copy of How Democratic Is the American Constitution?
3. Pen/Pencil

Laptops, cellphones and tablets will **NOT** be permitted during the conference period.

6. **Optional Reading.** There are countless books written by political scientists, historians and academics that provide invaluable content and analysis relevant to the course and the competition. Alumni of the program have consistently said that reading these books was one of the most effective ways that they learned the content in the depth necessary to compete. Summer can be a great time to dive into one or more books - depending on your schedule. Use this [list of recommended books](#) as a guide when you choose what you might want to read. For those that do read there will be an optional oral assessment that can be factored into 1st quarter.

7. **Current events.** If you do not do so already, start following U.S. government and politics-related news stories. Look for daily news stories that portray the national government in action and highlight the issues/crises it must deal with everyday. Especially focus on stories that discuss Congress, the Presidency, Federal agencies, and the Supreme Court. Do not limit your newly-formed current events habit to just one publication or even type of media – vary your sources. This will benefit you significantly when it comes time for the competition – it is not uncommon for the judges to ask the students to make connections between their unit of study and current events.

Feel free to contact me over the summer if you have any questions or concerns!

Mrs. Kammerman

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**\*\*Turnitin.com: Your answers to the questions AND Constitution outline must be submitted to turnitin.com by 7:30 am on the first day of school.** Go to turnitin.com and register for your class. The site will ask for a class ID and enrollment key. This information is listed below.

Class ID - 29593849, Enrollment Key - winners