



Department of Instruction

What Your Child Will Learn in HS American Government

All Calvert County Core Social Studies Curriculum is based on [Maryland Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks](#)

Social Studies Skills and Processes

Reading and Source Analysis and Application

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it.
- Integrate and evaluate content presented graphically, visually, orally, and multimodally as well as in words within and across print and digital sources.
- Evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and fluency of the evidence.

Writing Standards

- Students will write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
- Students will write informative/ explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events.

Historical Thinking and Reasoning

- Engage in inquiry, including constructing compelling questions, supporting questions, and determining helpful resources needed to answer their questions.
- Evaluate context, continuity and change by analyzing connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
- Analyze various perspectives by analyzing the multiple factors that influenced peoples' perspectives during different historical eras and explaining how and why perspectives change over time.
- Analyze the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past and in contemporary society while evaluating their effects and implications.

American Government Course Content

Unit One: Structures and Origins of Government

1. Define government, list its purposes, and explain its importance.
2. Compare authoritarian and democratic governments regarding distribution of power, efficiency of decision-making, maintaining public order, protecting individual rights, and the ability to address crisis. (2.1.1.c)
3. Analyze the influence on the following historical developments on the philosophy and design of our American governmental system.
4. Analyze the preamble of the Constitution to determine how the Constitution sought to create a better system of government for the United States than was established by the Articles of Confederation. (1.1.2.e)
5. Analyze the principles of American representative democracy established by the Constitution. (1.1.1.b)
6. Describe the distribution of power in a federal system of government.
7. Analyze the purpose of limited government and its impact on the structure, function, and processes of government. (1.1.1.a)
8. Determine why Bills of Attainder, ex post facto laws, and the Suspension of Habeas Corpus are denied powers. (1.1.1.l)
9. Evaluate the balance between majority rule and the protection of individual rights. (1.1.1.c)
10. Describe the formal process for amending the Constitution and why this process is necessary. (Link back to federalism) (1.1.1.f)
11. Identify the rights in the Bill of Rights and how they protect individuals and limit the power of government. (1.1.2.f)
12. Analyze the function of America's founding documents (Dec. of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights, Constitutional Amendments, etc.) in improving justice and equality for all Americans over time.

Unit Two: The Legislative Branch

1. Describe the bicameral structure, powers, and organization of the United States Congress. (1.1.1.i)
2. Analyze how the Constitution provides for separation of powers and checks and balances related to the legislative branch of government. (1.1.1.j)
3. Describe the bicameral structure, powers, and organization of the Maryland General Assembly. (1.1.1.i)
4. Compare and contrast the powers and responsibilities of national, state and local legislative bodies. (1.1.1.h)
5. Describe the election process of members of Congress and the Maryland General Assembly. (1.1.1.g)
6. Determine the impact of reapportionment, redistricting, and gerrymandering on representation, including the impact on the representative demographics in Congress and the MD Gen Assembly. (3.1.2.a)

Unit Three: The Executive Branch

1. Describe the structure, power, and organization of the executive branch on the federal level. (1.1.1.g)
2. Describe the structure, power, and organization of the executive branch on the state and local levels. (1.1.1.g)
3. Compare and contrast the powers, roles, and responsibilities of local, state and national executives. (1.1.1.n)

4. Determine how the nominating process, closed and open primaries, and general elections reflect the principles of representative democracy, consent of the governed, and majority rule. (1.1.4.e)
5. Evaluate how the principles of the Constitution are demonstrated in the structure, power, and organization of the executive branch at the national, state, and local levels. (1.1.1.e)
6. Describe the role of regulatory agencies in carrying out the policies of the executive branch on the national and state level. (4.1.3.a)
7. Explain how executive departments and regulatory agencies assist in protecting rights, maintaining order, and protecting the safety of citizens. (1.2.3.b)
8. Describe the purpose, limitations, and impact of executive orders in protecting rights, maintaining order, and providing safety for citizens. (1.2.3.a)
9. Analyze the impact of crisis on expansion of state and federal government power. (1.2.3.c)
10. Evaluate the role of the state and federal governments concerning issues related to public safety and maintaining order and how those decisions affect individuals and groups. (1.2.3.d)

Unit Four: Judicial Branch

1. Describe the structure, power, and organization of the federal judicial branch of government. (1.1.1.g)
2. Describe the structure, power, and organization of the judicial branch on the state level. (1.1.1.g)
3. Evaluate how the principles of the Constitution are demonstrated in the American judicial system at the national and state levels. (1.1.1.e)
4. Describe the role of the courts in settling disputes in both criminal and civil proceedings. (1.2.5.a)
5. Identify the elements of civil law, including: (1.2.5.c) [plaintiff, defendant, contract, breach of contract, torts, damages, preponderance of evidence, petit jury]
6. Analyze the effectiveness of out of court settlements, arbitration, and mediation as alternatives to litigation. (1.2.5.b)
7. Identify the elements of criminal law, including: (1.2.5.c) [defendant, prosecutor, reasonable doubt, felony, misdemeanor, grand jury, indictment, petit jury, probable cause, presumption of innocence, plea bargaining, writ of habeas corpus, subpoena]
8. Describe the due process protections, included in the Bill of Rights. (1.1.2.f)
9. Compare the proceedings of civil and criminal cases, including: (1.2.5.e)
10. Analyze how the following Supreme Court decisions impacted limited government and checks and balances (judicial review). (1.2.1.d)
11. Analyze how the following Supreme Court decisions have impacted individual liberty. (1.2.1.a)
12. Analyze how the following Supreme Court decision impacted federalism. (1.2.1.b)
13. Analyze how the following Supreme Court decision impacted the separation of powers. (1.2.1.c)
14. Analyze how the following Supreme Court decisions impacted equal protection. (1.2.1.e)
15. Describe Supreme Court decisions that used the due process and equal protections clauses of the 14th Amendment to incorporate protection of individual rights and extend federal power. (1.2.4.a)

Unit Five: Political Behavior

1. Evaluate the purpose of the following with regards to elections, public policy, and public opinion used by. (1.1.4.a)

2. Analyze the tools individuals or groups may use to influence laws, government policies, and elections and evaluate their effectiveness, including: (1.1.4.b and c)
3. Evaluate how the strategies and techniques individuals and groups use to influence government policy and institutions affect the principles of American democracy (1.1.4.g)
4. Analyze the voting patterns of various demographic groups and their impact on governmental policy. (3.1.2.b)

Unit Six: Economic Policy

1. Explain how the United States mixed economy combines elements of traditional, command, and market economies to answer the basic economic questions of what to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce. (4.1.2.a)
2. Evaluate the role of the United States government in answering the basic economic questions. (4.1.2.b)
3. Determine how scarcity and opportunity cost affect government decision-making. Evaluate how the principles of economic costs, benefits, and opportunity cost affect public policy issues, such as environmental and healthcare concerns, defense, trade, and education policy (4.1.1.a and 4.1.1.c)
4. Explain how governments prioritize the competing socio-economic goals of freedom, growth, stability, equity, national defense, environmental protection, and educational quality in response to changing economic, social, and political conditions. (4.1.1.b)
5. Analyze the role of the state and federal legislative branches in developing fiscal policy. (4.1.4.c)
6. Analyze the role of the executive in the budgetary process on the national, state, and local level. (4.1.4.d)
7. Analyze how the Federal Reserve System uses the three tools of monetary policy, including open market operations, changes in the discount rate, and changes in the reserve requirements to influence the economy. (4.1.4.g)
8. Explain how the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the unemployment rate, and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measure economic performance. (4.1.4.b)
9. Explain how the business cycle reflects economic instability, including periods of inflation and recession. (4.1.4.a)

Unit Seven: Domestic Policy

1. Analyze how geographic characteristics and shared interests stimulate regional cooperation between state governments, influence policy, and effect political decision-making. (3.1.1.a)
2. Analyze the importance of regional characteristics and interests, including economic development, natural resources, climate and environmental issues, and population shifts in formulating local, state, and national government policy. (3.1.1.b)
3. Analyze patterns, trends, and projections of population and determine how these factors may affect environmental policy, education spending, health care, and social security. (3.1.1.c)
4. Describe how limited government impacts the development and implementation of government policies for entitlements, including social security, housing, and nutritional assistance. (1.1.3.a)
5. Evaluate how the rights and responsibilities of citizens impact government policies regarding public health, including immunization, Medicare and Medicaid, and food safety. (1.1.3.b)
6. Analyze how federalism impacts government policies for education, including school choice. (1.1.3.c)

7. Analyze the impact of limited government on government policies for technology, including cybersecurity, censorship, and energy. (1.1.3.e)
8. Evaluate the ways that national, state, and local governments develop policies to address land use and environmental issues, such as pollution, urban sprawl, property rights and land use/zoning. (3.1.3.a)
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of governmental policies (legislation, executive orders, and court decisions) in promoting equity and civil rights for minorities, women, LGBTQ+, and the disabled. (1.2.2.a)
10. Analyze American immigration policies (1.2.2.)

Unit Eight: Foreign Policy

1. Explain how geographic characteristics and shared interests stimulate cooperation between countries, influence foreign policy and effect political decision-making. (3.1.1.a)
2. Analyze the conflicting demands of the American foreign policy goals related to economic well-being, national security, and human rights. (2.2.1.a)
3. Contrast isolationism with interventionism in American foreign policy. (2.2.1.b)
4. Examine the tools used by the executive branch to develop and implement foreign policy. (2.2.1.c)
5. Examine the role of Congress in influencing the development and implementation of foreign policy. (1.1.1.i)
6. Evaluate how the foreign policy tools used by the United States, such as military intervention, economic sanctions, foreign aid, and diplomacy affect American relationships with other countries. (2.2.1.d)
7. Explain the military and security functions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and United Nations (UN). (2.2.2.a)
8. Explain the humanitarian role of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and the United Nations (UN). (2.2.2.b)
9. Explain the economic function of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)/United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), the United Nations (UN), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). (2.2.2.c)
10. Evaluate the United States involvement in international organizations to determine if this involvement advances or hinders the achievement of its foreign policy goals. (2.2.2.d)