

Hello AP GoPo Student _____!

As you may already know, AP courses at Gettysburg High School require summer assignments, and this one is no different. As with most assignments, this is also a test of your understanding of directions, so pay close attention. There are two summer assignments for this course; one is a guided reading of pre-revolutionary and revolutionary political documents that influenced the founding of our country. The second is a current events assignment, to bring the material into the 21st Century, the temporal locus of the course. Both of these will be due the first day of school, in August, even though the class won't be meeting until the following January. If you are like most AP students, your schedule is going to be very busy this year, so giving you an extension to work on these assignments past the summer would not be doing you any favors, so please turn it in on time or before.

You will be turning in this assignment in two different parts in two different ways, the only two ways I accept any assignments. First, in paper – this packet is your guided reading. Unless you have an IEP or 504 that says you can't write, you will write your answers **in the space provided** – you may wish to outline your answer elsewhere first, even on your phone. For some this will be easy; for others, a challenge, but brevity is a skill you need for the exam next May. The current event assignment, since it involves you linking articles you analyze, should be shared [Google doc](#), the only other way you will be turning in assignments in my class. You will also be doing a battery of practice exams on College Board as the only other way to earn points in this class.

The Guided Reading is straight forward – just do the readings and answer the questions – although, good students that you are, you know that order is wrong – you should read the questions *before* the reading, then *again* after as you answer them. Since all of these documents are older than copyright laws, they are freely available in the public domain. I have put a link to each one below its name and the url in a footnote. They are all from the Gutenberg project except the Montesquieu, which Gutenberg only had in the original (feel free to read that if you are also fluent in French); and the two declarations, both from the National Archives; just follow the links under that section.

The current event assignment is a little more complicated. It requires you to gain some understanding of each of the sections we will be studying. As these are the subject areas suggested by the College Board to prepare for the exam, information on their content is readily available online. I recommend familiarizing yourself with [the Class and Exam Description](#) for this course. Then you need to find two (2) current event articles for each of the five (5) sections. For each article, you are to write a summary of the article and then a second paragraph analyzing why you think it fits within the subject heading you chose it for. The second part will weigh most in determining your success, so make sure you know what the subject headings entail.

That's it. Any questions, or to request an electronic form of the assignment to save the typing in Google to find the sources, feel free to e-mail me at tjurney@gasd-pa.org or stop by B233. I look forward to meeting you all in the Spring of 2025.

Thomas F. Jurney

Assignment the First: Guided Reading

You may bullet-point all responses¹.

John Locke: *Second Treatise of Civil Government*

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7370>

Before reading Locke, do some research² and discuss the historical context of the *Second Treatise*. When did he write this and why? What was his purpose? What was happening at the time that can provide insight into Locke's motivations and perspective?

In what many ways and in what contexts does Locke continuously refer to the laws of nature? How does Locke differentiate between the laws of nature and the laws of man? Provide specific support from the reading.

When, according to Locke, is it necessary for man to give up certain liberties under the laws of nature?

According to Locke, what is the role of the legislative power and how does it get that power? Be detailed in your response.

¹ While good grammar and complete sentences are great, AP GoPo isn't particular about form, but content, so bullet-pointing this assignment will get you in the practice for your FRQ's. Plus, you really don't have that much room – and that is intentional. This is an exercise not just in content acquisition, but editing.

² <https://plato.stanford.edu/> is a great source, as is <https://iep.utm.edu/> or even https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Political_philosophy; just no Wikipedia, please.

Under what circumstances, to Locke, might it be necessary for the people to dissolve their government and start anew? Be detailed in your response.

Baron de Montesquieu: *The Spirit of the Laws*

<http://www.bard.edu/library/arendt/pdfs/Montesquieu-Spirit.pdf>

Before reading Montesquieu, do some research and discuss the historical context of *The Spirit of the Laws*. When did he write this and why? What was his purpose? What was happening at the time that can provide insight into Montesquieu's motivations and perspective?

Immediately in the first five paragraphs Montesquieu lays out an idea that directly influenced the shaping of American government. What is it and why does he state it is so important?

According to Montesquieu, who should exercise executive power? Who should exercise legislative power? Why?

What does Montesquieu say about the idea of the executive limiting the legislative power? How about the legislative limiting the executive power?

Who, according to Montesquieu, should comprise the army, and what role does he say the army should play?

To Montesquieu, what will ultimately cause the state to perish?

Jean Jacques Rousseau: *The Social Contract*

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/46333>

Before reading Rousseau, do some research and discuss the historical context of *The Social Contract*. When did he write this and why? What was his purpose? What was happening at the time that can provide insight into Rousseau's motivations and perspective?

To Rousseau, what is the fundamental question that he seeks to address in *The Social Contract*? Reword and analyze this question.

According to Rousseau, what is the social contract and what are the social contract's benefits to society? Explain thoroughly, and include who the parties to the contract are and what obligations they have under the contract – what are they giving up to the other?

What does Rousseau think of the concept of individualism, and how does the social contract affect individual will?

What is Rousseau's overall thinking on the concept of representative democracy vs. direct democracy? Explain in detail.

In what ways are Rousseau's theories and Locke's theories of the role of government similar? Cite specific examples.

Thomas Paine: *Common Sense*

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/147>

Before reading Paine, read the introduction in the book and discuss the historical context of *Common Sense*. When did he write this and why? What was his purpose? What was happening at the time that can provide insight into Paine's motivations and perspective?

How does Paine view the role and importance of government in general? Be specific.

What are Paine's views on the monarchy, both in general and that of England? Use supporting details from *Common Sense*.

What arguments does Paine use to support the notion that the American colonies would be better off as an independent nation?

A number of Paine's appeals and ideas exhibit the influence of people like Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. Discuss some areas where you see these influences.

Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Declaration of Independence

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/virginia-declaration-of-rights>

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

*Certainly, the philosophies undergirding the Declaration of Independence were not original to Thomas Jefferson. Nor was the idea for writing such a declaration in the first place. Likewise, though the Virginia Declaration of Rights preceded Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, most of the ideas expressed were not original to its author, George Mason (and later added to by James Madison, Thomas Ludwell Lee, and Patrick Henry). Indeed, Mason based much of his draft on the English Bill of Rights of 1689. Moreover, both declarations have their roots in Enlightenment thought and the philosophies of the likes of Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau and were directly influenced by the urgings of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*.*

Here are two questions to address:

What specific things do the Virginia Declaration of Rights and Declaration of Independence have in common?

What specific ideas expressed in both documents can be traced to those of Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Paine? Make direct connections.

Assignment the Second: Current Events

Find two (2) current articles³ for each of the subject areas. Make sure to include both the title the link to the article! For each one, have a paragraph summary and a second paragraph of your analysis of why it fits within the unit you chose it for. Try to incorporate something from each of the original documents into your analysis, using each one once. You will be doing the same assignment for every unit as we go, with an added vocabulary requirement but minus the references to 17th and 18th Century political philosophy⁴, so if you find good sources for current event articles, make sure to bookmark them.

Subject Areas:

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Unit 5: Political Participation and Linkage Institutions

³ 'Articles' are anything written by someone who makes their living writing, i.e. let the market decide. This rules out any random posting, letters to the editor, or graffiti in all its forms. And any internet-only source is right out. You need to have an author, and the article needs to be both current, i.e., published during this summer, and about something that happened this summer. Current.

⁴ Outside a basic understanding of the social contract, usually within the context of the Declaration of Independence (*supra*), the AP test for this course rarely asks questions about 17th and 18th Century political philosophy, which we will shed like a chrysalis after Unit 1, but to understand how our government and politics work in 2026, it is the best place to start.