AP Government Summer Assignment

Welcome to AP U.S. Government & Politics. This course assumes students already have a working understanding of foundational constitutional principles, landmark Supreme Court cases, and the structure of American government. The purpose of this summer assignment is to help build that foundation before the school year begins.

Every topic in this assignment is directly connected to the AP Exam and will be revisited multiple times throughout the year in lectures, discussions, writing assignments, unit tests, and AP Exam review. Students who complete this assignment thoughtfully typically begin the year with a major advantage in understanding course content and keeping up with the pace of the class.

All work should be completed in your own words. Outside resources may be used to assist your understanding, but copying directly from websites, AI-generated summaries, classmates, or other sources is considered plagiarism and may result in academic consequences.

Formatting Expectations

- Typed responses only
- 12 pt readable font
- Clearly labeled sections and headings
- Submit as ONE PDF document via OnCampus
- Responses should be thoughtful and well-developed, not brief or one-sentence answers

---

U.S. Constitution Dissection & Analysis Assignment

AP U.S. Government & Politics
Due: August 18 via OnCampus

Purpose

To gain a foundational understanding of the structure, principles, and powers established by the U.S. Constitution and to analyze how it shapes the American system of government.

PART I: PREAMBLE

1. Write the Preamble in your own words.
2. Identify and explain the six purposes of government listed in the Preamble.

PART II: THE ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTION

Article	Topic	Summary (in your own words)	Key Powers or Principles	Example in Today's Government
I	Legislative Branch			
II	Executive Branch			
III	Judicial Branch			
IV	States			
V	Amending Process			
VI	Supremacy Clause			
VII	Ratification			

PART III: CHECKS & BALANCES + SEPARATION OF POWERS

1. How does the Constitution prevent one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
2. Give one example of a check each branch has over another branch.
3. Why did the Framers build a government based on separation of powers?

When appropriate, connect your answers to constitutional principles such as:

- federalism
- limited government
- separation of powers
- checks and balances
- popular sovereignty
- individual rights

PART IV: THE AMENDMENTS

A. The Bill of Rights (Amendments 1–10)

1. For each amendment, write a brief summary of the right or protection it provides.
2. Choose TWO amendments and explain how they connect to a modern-day issue or event.

B. Key Amendments After the Bill of Rights

Amendment	Summary	Impact / Importance
13th		
14th		
15th		
17th		
19th		
22nd		
24th		
26th		

PART V: APPLICATION & ANALYSIS

1. How does the Constitution reflect the principle of federalism?
2. Why is the amendment process intentionally difficult?
3. Which part of the Constitution has had the greatest impact on American society? Support your answer with evidence and explanation.

Submission Checklist

✅ All sections completed in full
✅ Constitution read and annotated
✅ Clear, thoughtful responses
✅ Proper formatting followed
✅ Sources cited if used

Foundational Documents Assignment

There are 9 foundational documents required for the AP Government Exam. These documents will be used repeatedly throughout the course and are essential to understanding AP Government concepts and FRQ writing.

For EACH document:

- Write a well-developed summary paragraph
- Include:
    - main ideas
    - historical context
    - constitutional principles
    - significance/impact on American government
- Responses should be approximately 8–12 sentences each

Required Foundational Documents

- Federalist No. 10
- Federalist No. 39
- Federalist No. 51
- Federalist No. 70
- Federalist No. 78
- Brutus No. 1
- Declaration of Independence
- Articles of Confederation
- Constitution of the United States
- Letter from a Birmingham Jail — Martin Luther King Jr.
- The Gettysburg Address
- Core principles from the writings of Adam Smith
- The Emancipation Proclamation

Supreme Court Cases Assignment

There are 14 required Supreme Court cases for the AP Government Exam. These cases are heavily tested throughout the course and will appear repeatedly in class discussions, FRQs, unit tests, and AP review.

For EACH case, include:

- constitutional question
- background/facts of the case
- ruling of the Court
- constitutional principle established

- significance/impact of the decision

Responses should be detailed, accurate, and written in your own words.

Required Supreme Court Cases

- McCulloch v. Maryland
- United States v. Lopez
- Engel v. Vitale
- Wisconsin v. Yoder
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District
- New York Times Co. v. United States
- Schenck v. United States
- Gideon v. Wainwright
- McDonald v. Chicago
- Brown v. Board of Education
- Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission
- Baker v. Carr
- Shaw v. Reno
- Marbury v. Madison

A recommended source for accurate case information is:
Oyez Project

Required Course Materials

Textbook

Students should acquire the following textbook and bring it to class on the first day:

American Government: Institutions and Policies, 16th Edition by Wilson & DiIulio

AP Review Book

Recommended:

- Princeton Review AP Government
- 5 Steps to a 5 AP Government