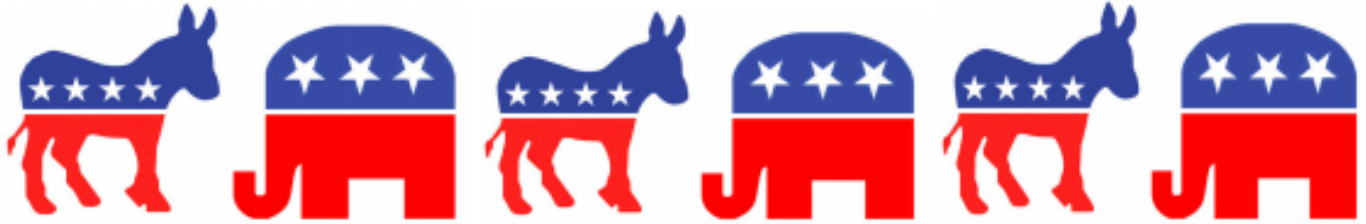


AP U.S. Government & Politics Summer Assignment 2026



Dear Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics Student,

Welcome to Advanced Placement U.S. Government & Politics! I am pleased that you have enrolled in this class, and I hope that next year's course will open your eyes and ears to our governmental system, political environment, and your potential role in it. Next year will be an exciting year for you all, not only because it will be upperclassmen, but because we are coming off the heels of one of the hottestly contested presidential races in our history, and there remains great political division in our country. Many of the ideals that we will learn throughout the year will manifest themselves in real life.

According to the College Board's course description,

“Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics provides a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States. Students will study U.S. foundational documents, Supreme Court decisions, and other texts and visuals to gain an understanding of the relationships and interactions among political institutions, processes, and behaviors. [Students] will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments. In addition, [students] will complete a political science research or applied civics project.”

The College Board redesigned the [course curriculum framework and exam](#) in 2018 with the help of many stakeholders, including AP teachers, higher education faculty, as well as the public at large, and experts from across the political spectrum. This course will require all of us to push ourselves to do our best work, not just enough to “skate by”. Independent reading and current events analysis are essential to succeeding in the AP U.S. Government & Politics course.

I am not a big fan of “busy work”. Our summer assignment lays a great foundation for our first unit of study and will allow you to become an informed and engaged citizen participant. Many of you may not currently read national newspapers like the *New York Times* or news magazines such as *Newsweek* or *US News and World Report*. You may not even watch nightly news television programs on CBS, ABC, CNN, or Fox News. This must change immediately for you to be fully prepared for our class. If you have not yet done these things regularly, don't panic; there will be time for you to get up to speed. You only need to have the desire to learn about our government and political system. With that desire, we as a team will work towards our common goal of improving our democracy by creating a more informed populace.

Enjoy your summer and stay engaged in terms of what is happening in our country and world. If you have any questions regarding the summer assignment on the subsequent pages, please do not hesitate to email me. The summer assignment will be due on **Friday, September 4, 2026.**

Best Regards,

Mr. Marcus Thompson (mthompson@jefftwp.org)

Part 1: Constitutional Scavenger Hunt

The [US Constitution](#) is an EXTREMELY important document for everyone in this country, especially AP GoPo students! Understanding it will provide a great foundation for our class. Therefore, you will READ IT, KNOW IT, and LOVE IT by the time you enter our class in September. *This work will be especially useful for Unit 1!*

Task #1: Structure of the Constitution—Read each article and summarize the general purpose or subject of the article. Use words, pictures, symbols, colors, etc. in your summary. Answer the analysis questions.

Article Number and Title	Summary/General Purpose or Subject
Article I	
Article II	
Article III	
Article IV	
Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	

- 1) Using Articles I, II, & III, describe how each branch can check the other branches.
- 2) Why do you suppose the founders designed our federal government this way?

Task #2: The Amendments— Briefly describe each amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
 Answer the analysis questions

AMENDMENT	Brief description of the amendment (all parts).
1	
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3) What are the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution collectively known as, and why were they added to the Constitution?

4) Identify the three amendments that were passed in the years immediately after the Civil War. What were the goals of these amendments?

5) Describe three amendments that extended suffrage to new groups of people and briefly explain the historical context/events that likely led to the passage and ratification of these amendments.

Task#3: Important Constitutional Clauses—The following are important clauses listed in the Constitution or the Amendments. For each, describe the clause in your own words, cite where it is located in the Constitution (Article #, Section #, Clause #), and explain why the clause is so important.

Constitutional Clause	Description & Citation	Importance/Significance
Full Faith and Credit Clause		
Commerce Clause		
Supremacy Clause		
Necessary and Proper Clause (Elastic Clause)		
General Welfare Clause		
Establishment Clause		
Free Exercise Clause		
Free-speech Clause		
Due Process Clause		
Equal Protection Clause		

Part 2: Current Events Journal

Task:

This summer, there will be an abundance of news stories centered around the Government's response to the economy, the War in Iran, the mid-term elections, and the continued coverage of Trump's presidency. You are to follow current events over the summer and get a head start on understanding how the U.S.

government/political system operates. You will need to select a total of **three news articles from three separate weeks over the summer**, and **write a 1 single-spaced 1-page reflection for each article using 12pt. Times New Roman font (a total of 3 pages)**.

- You should look for articles from different sources that emphasize any **ONE of the following constitutional principles/concepts from our first unit of study**: federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review, elastic clause, the supremacy clause, and the commerce clause.
- The articles can **focus on any of the following topics**: the Congress, the Supreme Court, the President, a government agency, state governments, foreign policy, domestic policy, homeland security, immigration, taxes, healthcare reform, education, judicial/cabinet appointments, economic policy, interest/lobbyist groups, political parties, election-related news, and polls. (This is not an inclusive list.)

Each current events reflection **MUST** include:

- A brief summary of the article.
- The impact of this event/decision on the US government and populace.
- The possible consequences of this event/decision (positive, negative, or neutral).
- A clear connection to **AT LEAST 1 of the constitutional principles/concepts** listed above.
- An evaluation of bias, if any, in the article.

Students must clearly address each item above in their reflection. Students need to include a citation in the **Chicago Style** at the end of each reflection. Students must pay attention to the date of the article, as the articles must be from **three different weeks** over the summer. (IE., 1 article from July 13, 1 article from July 29, and 1 article from August 12). Remember, the goal of the summer assignment is to better understand how our governmental system operates, so keep that in mind when selecting articles. Below is a list of nine linked news outlets for you to choose from.

RealClear Politics

POLITICO