AP United States Government and Politics – 2026 Summer Assignment

The AP course for US Government is a college-level class that is designed to prepare you for the AP exam in May. To set you up for success in this class, I am giving you a summer assignment to help you review some foundational documents and major Supreme Court cases in our country's history. The 2026 summer assignment for Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics consists of nine activities.

You are expected to read and review each of the items on this list over the summer. We will review and test on all these items in the first weeks of school. These are the foundational documents for this course and are necessary for fully understanding and preparing for success in this class.

The Activities

Declaration of Independence

The Declaration of Independence is the statement adopted by the Second Continental Congress meeting at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on July 4, 1776. The Declaration announced that the Thirteen Colonies at war with the Kingdom of Great Britain would regard themselves as thirteen independent sovereign states, no longer under British rule. With the Declaration, these new states took a collective first step toward forming the United States of America.

Articles of Confederation

The Articles of Confederation was the first written constitution of the United States. Stemming from wartime urgency, its progress was slowed by fears of central authority and extensive land claims by states before was it was ratified on March 1, 1781. Under these articles, the states remained sovereign and independent, with Congress serving as the last resort on appeal of disputes.

Read: *A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution* by Carol Berkin

We will be reviewing, discussing, and testing on this book by Carol Berkin during the first month of class. *A Brilliant Solution* discusses the circumstances around the writing of the Constitution and what the founders argued about during the Constitutional Convention. You will be tested on this content during the school year and the historical background will be part of the AP test.

The United States Constitution

The Constitution of the United States of America is the supreme law of the United States. Empowered with the sovereign authority of the people by the Framers and the consent of the legislatures of the states, it is the source of all government powers, and provides important limitations on the government that protect the fundamental rights of United States citizens.

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Federalist Papers #10, #51, #70, and #78

The **Federalist Papers** are a series of 85 essays arguing in support of the **United States Constitution**. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay were the authors behind the pieces, and the three men wrote collectively under the name of **Publius**. Read each of the four papers.

Brutus #1

The antifederalist papers are a collection of essays written in opposition to the Federalists Papers; Brutus 1 is the most famous. Brutus is a pseudonym used either by Robert Yates, Melancton Smith, or John Williams. The antifederalists thought of themselves as protectors of the young nation of the US from tyranny.

Bill of Rights

The Bill of Rights comprises the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. Proposed following the often-bitter 1787–88 debate over ratification of Constitution and written to address the objections raised by Anti-Federalists, the Bill of Rights amendments add to the Constitution specific guarantees of personal freedoms and rights, clear limitations on the government's power in judicial and other proceedings, and explicit declarations that all powers not specifically granted to the U.S. Congress by the Constitution are reserved for the states or the people.

Supreme Court Case

Research 14 Supreme Court cases that you should know for the AP test; these cases will be used in class, so make sure you understand what is happening in each one.

These are the 14 cases:

Marbury v. Madison (1803)

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

Schenck v. US (1919)

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

Baker v. Carr (1962)

Engel v. Vitale (1962)

Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)

Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

NY Times v. US (1971)

Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)

Shaw v. Reno (1993)

U.S. vs Lopez (1995)

Citizens United v. FEC (2010)

McDonald v. City of Chicago (2010)

MLK Letter from Birmingham Jail

The Letter from Birmingham Jail, also known as the Letter from Birmingham City Jail and The Negro Is Your Brother, is an open letter written on April 16, 1963, by Martin Luther King Jr. The letter defends the strategy of nonviolent resistance to racism.