

Marion P Thomas Charter High School

History Department

AP Politics and Government



AP United States Government and Politics Summer 2026 Assignment

The AP U.S. Government and Politics is an introductory college-level course in U.S. government and politics. Students cultivate their understanding of U.S. government and politics through analysis of data and text-based sources as they explore topics like constitutionalism, liberty and order, civic participation in a representative democracy, competing policy-making interests, and methods of political analysis.

Part 1: Constitutional Framework Analysis [100 Points]

Analyze the Constitution and explain the significance of each article, amendment, and key clauses.

Part 2: Student Digital Portfolio

To prepare for the AP U.S. Government & Politics course, it is important to stay informed about current events, as the course focuses on contemporary political issues. Over the summer, you are expected to create a digital news portfolio that demonstrates your engagement with U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

Instructions: Identify:

- 10 news articles
- 5 political cartoons

Each item must be paired with an analytical summary that:

- Clearly explains the main content and message
- Discusses its relevance to American politics or policy
- Reflects on why the issue is important

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Additional guidelines:

- Include a link to each article
- Use ONLY reliable sources, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News & World Report*, or *The Christian Science Monitor*
- Your portfolio must only cover the period from June 2025 through September 2025, with items organized chronologically
- Represent a range of viewpoints on political issues

Strategies for analytic reading:

- As you read, be sure to annotate passages and to define unfamiliar words, terms, and concepts.
- Be sure to read every page of each assigned reading.
- Read actively: Do not simply copy down sentences as you read. Stop, think about what you are reading, and write down the main idea that is being expressed in that particular section. Re-read the passage if you are unsure of what the author is attempting to express.
- REMEMBER Read actively and not as a passive couch potato.
 - Take notes on the important information as you read each chapter. For example, write down each bold heading as you read and summarize what you read/learn from each section in 1-2 sentences.

About Plagiarism and AI-Generated Student Work

Submitted assignments that are suspected of plagiarism or AI-generated will result in zero grade, a referral, and subject to further disciplinary actions and consequences.

STUDENT NAME:
AP Politics and Government

Part 1: The Constitution

1. The Blueprint of the Constitution

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the [link](#) to thoroughly read each article and provide a summary explaining the purpose of each.

Article Number and Title [Place the title under each article]	Article Purpose and Summary
Article I	
Article II	
Article III	
Article IV	
Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	

2. Based on your analysis of the articles, explain how each branch of government can check the other. Your response must include paraphrased evidence from the relevant articles.
3. Evaluate the extent to which the above Constitutional principle strengthens government.

The Amendments

Part 1:

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the [link](#) to briefly describe each amendment using the table below. Be sure to describe all parts of each.

Amendment	Brief Description of the Amendment
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Critical Analysis: Provide a fully formed response to all parts of each question.

1. What are the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution collectively known as and why were they added to the Constitution? Explain the historical issue that led to the creation of these amendments.
2. Identify and describe three amendments that were passed in the years immediately after the Civil War. Explain the purpose and rationale for these amendments.
3. Describe three amendments that extended suffrage to new groups of people and briefly explain the historical context that likely led to the passage and ratification of each.

INSTRUCTIONS: For this section, you will analyze and explain the significance of some constitutional clauses. To do so, [use this link](#) to analyze each clause AND explain their importance. Be sure not to simply quote or copy and paste a response—use your own voice and paraphrase. Do not forget to cite the location of each clause.

Constitutional Clause	Description & Citation	Importance
Full faith and credit clause		
Commerce clause		
Necessary and proper clause		
General welfare clause		
Establishment clause		
Free exercise clause		
Free speech clause		
Due process clause		
Equal protection clause		

STUDENT NAME:
AP Politics and Government

AP Politics and Government Student Digital Portfolio

Overview: To prepare for the AP U.S. Government & Politics course, it is important to stay informed about current events, as the course focuses on contemporary political issues. Over the summer, you are expected to create a news portfolio that demonstrates your engagement with U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

Instructions: Identify:

- 10 news articles
- 5 political cartoons

Each item must be paired with an analytical summary that:

- Clearly explains the main content and message
- Discusses its relevance to American politics or policy
- Reflects on why the issue is important

Additional guidelines:

- Include a link to each article
- Use ONLY reliable sources, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News & World Report*, or *The Christian Science Monitor*
- Your portfolio must only cover the period from June 2025 through September 2025, with items organized chronologically
- Represent a range of viewpoints on political issues

Be sure to consult the rubric posted on the tab before submitting your portfolio.

AP U.S. Government & Politics Student Digital Portfolio Rubric

Category	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaching Expectations (2)	Below Expectations (0)
Content Requirements	Includes all 10 articles, 5 cartoons, and 5 graphs/charts; all content is relevant and high-quality	Includes all required items with generally relevant and appropriate content	Missing 1–2 required items or includes content of limited relevance	Missing 3 or more required items or includes off-topic/inappropriate content
Analytical Summaries	Summaries are insightful, well-developed, and demonstrate a strong understanding of political significance	Summaries are complete and show a clear understanding of the issues	Summaries are basic, underdeveloped, or lack political analysis	Summaries are incomplete, missing, or show minimal understanding
Relevance to U.S. Politics	Each item is clearly and thoughtfully linked to U.S. domestic or foreign policy and its political impact	Most items are relevant to U.S. policy and demonstrate some understanding of political issues	Some items lack clear relevance or show superficial understanding	Items show little or no connection to U.S. politics
Use of Sources	All sources are credible, reputable, and clearly cited with working links	Most sources are credible and links are mostly functional	Several sources lack credibility or links are missing/incorrect	Sources are unreliable or missing
Chronological Organization	Items are clearly organized by date across June–September with balanced coverage	Items are mostly in order and span the time frame	Organization is inconsistent; some clustering or gaps in time	No clear order; large time gaps or disorganized structure
Perspective and Balance	Demonstrates strong effort to include diverse political viewpoints and a balanced perspective	Includes multiple viewpoints with some balance	Limited variety of perspectives; may reflect one-sided views	Lacks perspective; most items reflect a single viewpoint
Presentation and Format	Portfolio is polished, easy to navigate, and follows all format guidelines (e.g., no page protectors)	Portfolio is neat and mostly follows format instructions	Format is inconsistent or somewhat difficult to navigate	Disorganized or does not follow format guidelines
Mechanics and Clarity	Writing is clear, grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors	Minor errors in grammar or spelling that do not affect readability	Frequent grammar/spelling errors that occasionally hinder understanding	Major writing issues that make the content difficult to understand

Cartoons:

Paste 5 political cartoons and explain the meaning behind the cartoon. See the exemplar below:



The above cartoon depicts a car being driven by Elon Musk. JD Vance is in the passenger seat and Donald Trump is in the back. Trump's skin color and hair are intentionally exaggerated. Trump is holding a toy steering wheel as if he is the child of the family. Vance, the Vice-President, appears to have lipstick on and long lashes so it would appear as if it is a traditional family with JD Vance representing the mother and Musk portraying the father. The cartoon suggests that Elon Musk is really in charge of the government, that JD Vance knows who is in charge, and that Trump is oblivious to the fact that he isn't truly in charge. This cartoon was created early in Trump's second term when DOGE was slashing government spending and jobs. Most people in the country felt that the decisions of Elon Musk were guiding policy far more than any other elected politician.

Identify:

- 10 news articles

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Additional guidelines:

- Include a link to each article
- Use ONLY reliable sources, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *U.S. News & World Report*, or *The Christian Science Monitor*
- Your portfolio must only cover the period from June 2026 through September 2026, with items organized chronologically
- Represent a range of viewpoints on political issues