



American Government Curriculum

Board Approved: 05/21/2026

Course Information

**High School
Full Year**

Course Description:

This Government course is designed to equip students with the rationale, knowledge, and skills necessary to become informed, engaged, and contributing citizens. It emphasizes understanding the historical foundations, structure, and functions of American government. It recognizes how decisions are made and how individuals can influence the government. The students will understand and analyze the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in Missouri and the United States. This course will fulfill the Missouri state graduation requirements. Students will be required to take and pass a civics exam in accordance with Missouri Statute 170.011.

Transfer Goals:

- Engage thoughtfully and responsibly in civic life, contributing with knowledge and care to the public decision-making process.
- Use tools to understand the order of government events over time.
- Understand how history shapes what people think about government.
- Examine governmental issues by identifying their causes, impacts, and the ways people work to resolve them.
- See how government rules and systems impact people and groups.
- Understand the roles citizens and organizations play in addressing societal challenges.
- Use visuals like maps to show how government ideas connect and change.

Curriculum Standards: [Social Studies Grades 6-12 Missouri Learning Standards](#)

Curriculum Resource(s): *Magruder's American Government Interactive*, 2023, Savvas

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Family Notification Procedures

Social Studies

Core Instructional Materials

- Core instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, articles, primary/secondary sources, maps, and videos) used in class will be listed on Canvas and in course syllabi. Families will be notified if materials change.

Library and Research Resources

- Students may check out social studies-related nonfiction books or reference materials from the school library to support class learning. Families may contact their school's library media specialist to sign up for email notifications through Destiny to monitor materials checked out from district libraries.
- [How Parents/Guardians Can Monitor Student Resource Use](#)
- When a unit includes student-selected research materials or inquiry-based exploration, teachers will notify families and encourage them to discuss selected resources with their students. For units involving student-selected research using multiple resources, teachers will notify families and encourage ongoing conversations about materials used.

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Unit 1: Foundations of American Government

Timeframe: 5 weeks

Unit Description: In this unit, students will explore how key U.S. founding documents define a constitutional republic that combines citizen participation with safeguards against the abuse of power. They will examine how historical experiences, philosophical ideas, and early governmental structures informed the development of American politics. They will also analyze how these foundational documents established enduring concepts that continue to influence expectations for government, citizenship, and civic responsibility.

Enduring Understandings:

- The American government constantly evolves and adapts.
- Foundational American documents are deeply rooted in classical and Enlightenment philosophy.
- Democratic and authoritarian governments fundamentally differ in their societal impact.
- An effective national government requires strength and balance.

Essential Questions:

- How did colonial self-rule shape American expectations for independence?
- What classical and Enlightenment ideas influenced the Declaration of Independence?
- How do democratic and authoritarian governments differ in their impact on society?
- How did early documents, structures of government, and traditions shape enduring government concepts?
- In what ways did the Articles of Confederation fail as a national government?

Unit 1 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
GV.1.CC.A	• I can use tools to analyze a chronological sequence of events related to a study of government.
GV.1.G.B	• I can analyze the relationship between the geography of the original 13 colonies and the formation of the United States government.
GV.1.EC.A	• I can examine the opportunity costs and benefits of economic decisions on society as a whole as well as on individuals and governments.
GV.1.PC.A	• I can describe how people's perspectives shaped the sources/ artifacts they created.
GV.1.PC.B	• I can examine the origins and impact of social structures and stratification on societies and relationships between people and

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	governments.
GV.2.CC.A	I can trace the evolution of government in the English colonies to explain American colonists' expectations for self-rule.
GV.2.CC.D	I can compare and contrast the structure and function of democratic governments and authoritarian governments, noting their impact on people, groups, and societies.
GV.2.GS.A	I can analyze how the codification of law impacted early civilizations and shaped enduring concepts of government, law, and social order.
GV.2.GS.B	I can apply the concepts of natural law, social contract, due process of law, and popular sovereignty to explain the purposes and legacy of the Declaration of Independence.
GV.2.GS.C	I can describe the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation to explain its failure as a national government.
GV.2.G.A	I can analyze how the geography of North America influenced the governmental systems that developed there.
GV.2.EC.A	I can analyze the impact of economics and economic theories on the formation of the United States' governmental ideals, principles, and structures.

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Unit 2: The Constitution

Timeframe: 5 weeks

Unit Description: In this unit, students will analyze the principles and processes of governance systems and analyze the origin and purpose of the United States Constitution. They will further examine how historical context, competing viewpoints, and foundational compromises influenced the Constitution's design and structure.

Enduring Understandings:

- The U.S. Constitution was formed through major compromises at the Constitutional Convention, resolving debates.
- Under federalism, the power balance between the national government and state governments in the U.S. is not fixed; it constantly changes and adapts over time.
- The U.S. Constitution was created to address the failures of the Articles of Confederation.
- The U.S. Constitution's purpose and lasting impact are understood through its core constitutional principles.

Essential Questions:

- How were the central debates of the Constitutional Convention resolved?
- How has the relationship between state and federal governmental powers changed over time?
- How did the Constitution address the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation?
- How do constitutional principles explain the Constitution's purpose and legacy?
- How does federalism balance power between the national government and state governments, and why is this evolving relationship important for American society today?

Unit 2 Standards	
STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
Unit 1 Standards	Including standards from Unit 1: GV.1.CC.A , GV.1.EC.A , GV.1.PC.A , GV.1.PC.B , GV.2.GS.A , GV.2.GS.C
<u>GV.1.CC.B</u>	• I can explain connections between the historical context and people's perspectives about government at the time.
<u>GV.1.G.A</u>	• Create and use maps and other graphic representations in order to explain relationships and reveal patterns or trends about government.
GV.2.CC.C	• I can evaluate the extent to which decisions made in the Constitutional Convention were influenced by previous models of government and experiences under British rule.
GV.3.CC.A	• I can explain how the central debates of the Constitutional Convention were resolved.

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GV.3.CC.B	• I can explain how concerns over a strong central government were addressed to provide for ratification of the Constitution.
GV.3.CC.D	• I can analyze the changing relationship between state and federal governmental powers.
GV.3.EC.A	• I can compare trade, monetary policy, and taxation under the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution.
GV.3.GS.A	• I can apply the concepts of due process of law, popular sovereignty, rule of law, representation, and federalism to explain the purpose and legacy of the Constitution.
GV.3.GS.B	• I can analyze the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution to determine their success in implementing the ideals of the Declaration of Independence
GV.3.GS.C	• I can analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government to determine how they function and interact
GV.3.GS.D	• I can describe and give examples of how the constitutional principle of checks and balances limits the powers of government and leaders.
GV.3.GS.F	• I can compare the structure and functions of local, state, and federal governments.
GV.2.PC.A	• I can analyze the varying perspectives of individuals and groups to explain emerging divisions and political philosophies as the United States was founded.

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Unit 3: Political Participation

Timeframe: 4-6 weeks

Unit Description: In this unit, students will learn how they can be connected to their government through political parties, interest groups, the media, and elections. Students will be able to explain the powers and responsibilities of citizens and institutions to address and solve problems.

Enduring Understandings:

- Government decisions have both intended and unintended impacts on individuals, groups, and society.
- Citizens and institutions possess powers and responsibilities to actively address and solve problems at local, state, and national levels.
- Political parties and interest groups influence the government, elections, and policy decisions through diverse perspectives.
- There are distinct processes for selecting political leaders across federal, state, and local governments, involving elections, nominations, and confirmations.
- Demographic characteristics influence voting behavior and election results at both the state and federal levels.
- The media plays a role in how issues are presented and perceived.

Essential Questions:

- What are the civic duties and responsibilities of a citizen of the United States?
- How can students participate and use local, state, and national governments to help shape decisions?
- How do political parties and interest groups represent different viewpoints, and how can individuals influence these groups?
- What influences what people think about elections and important issues, and what role does the media play in shaping these opinions?
- What factors influence our political ideology, and how do they influence our voting behavior?

Unit 3 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
Unit 1 Standards	Including standards from Unit 1: GV.1.CC.A , GV.1.EC.A , GV.1.PC.A , GV.1.PC.B ,
Unit 2 Standards	Including standards from Unit 2: GV.1.CC.B , GV.1.G.A, GV.3.GS.F
<u>GV.1.CC.B</u>	• I can explain connections between the historical context and people's perspectives about government at the time.
<u>GV.1.CC.C</u>	• I can develop a research plan, identify appropriate resources for investigating social studies topics, and create and present a research product, which applies an aspect of government to a contemporary issue.

priority standards indicated in **bold*

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<u>GV.1.CC.D</u>	• I can use an inquiry lens, develop compelling questions about government, determine helpful resources, and consider multiple points of view represented in the resources.
<u>GV.1.GS.B</u>	• I can distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens and institutions to address and solve problems.
GV.3.PC.B	• I can evaluate the intended and unintended impact of government decision-making on individuals, groups, and society.
GV.4.CC.C	• I can explain the powers and responsibilities of citizens and institutions to address and solve problems.
GV.4.GS.A	• I can evaluate the role and influence of contemporary political parties on government.
GV.4.GS.B	• I can explain a citizen's legal obligations, as well as opportunities for engaging with and using local, state, and federal governments to shape decision-making.
GV.4.GS.C	• I can compare the various processes pertaining to the selection of political leaders at the federal, state, and local levels.
GV.4.G.A	• I can analyze state and federal electoral results to determine the influence of social, regional, and demographic characteristics
GV.4.PC.A	• I can explain how political parties and interest groups reflect diverse perspectives and are influenced by individuals.
GV.4.PC.B	• I can evaluate factors that shape public opinion on elections and policy issues.

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Unit 4: Institutions

Timeframe: 7 weeks

Unit Description: In this unit, students will analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government to determine how they function and interact. They will evaluate how constitutional principles shape the distribution and limitation of power, as well as how these structures have evolved. Through case studies and historical examples, students will assess the intended and unintended consequences of governmental decisions and their impact on society.

Enduring Understandings:

- Each of the three government branches has distinct roles.
- The jobs, powers, and overall size of the three branches of government (Legislative, Executive, Judicial) have shifted and changed significantly.
- The Constitution's principles guide the relationship between the branches and provide for a limited government.
- Government decisions have planned effects and often unplanned results, which impact individuals, groups, and society.
- The government's role in the economy has changed significantly over American history.

Essential Questions:

- How do the three branches of government uniquely function and interact?
- How have the roles, powers, and size of the three branches of government changed over time?
- How does the system of checks and balances in the Constitution limit the power of the government and its leaders?
- How do government decisions, both those that are planned and those with unplanned outcomes, affect individuals, groups, and the broader society?
- How has the government's role in the economy changed throughout American history?

Unit 4 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
Unit 1 Standards	Including standards from Unit 1: GV.1.CC.A , GV.1.EC.A , GV.1.PC.A , GV.1.PC.B ,
Unit 2 Standards	Including standards from Unit 2: GV.1.CC.B , GV.1.G.A, GV.3.GS.F
Unit 3 Standards	Including standards from Unit 3: GV.1.CC.B , GV.1.CC.C , GV.1.CC.D , GV.1.GS.B , GV.3.PC.B, GV.4.CC.C
<u>GV.1.GS.A</u>	• I can analyze laws, policies, and processes to determine how governmental systems affect individuals and groups in society.

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GV.2.EC.A	• I can analyze the impact of economics and economic theories on the formation of the United States' governmental ideals, principles, and structures.
GV.3.CC.C	• I can trace the significant changes in roles, powers, and size of the three branches of government.
GV.3.EC.B	• I can analyze the changing roles of government in the economy throughout United States history.
GV.3.GS.C	• I can analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government to determine how they function and interact.
GV.3.GS.D	• I can describe and give examples of how the constitutional principle of checks and balances limits the powers of government and leaders.
GV.3.GS.F	• I can compare the structure and functions of local, state, and federal governments.
GV.3.PC.A	• I can analyze the varying perspectives of individuals and groups regarding the development of the American governmental system to explain emerging divisions and political philosophies.
GV.3.PC.B	• I can evaluate the intended and unintended impact of government decision-making on individuals, groups, and society.
GV.4.CC.A	• I can trace the changing power relationships between branches of the United States government over time.
GV.4.CC.B	• I can analyze changing ideals regarding an “active judiciary,” an “active legislature,” and an “active executive branch” in the United States government over time.
GV.4.EC.A	• I can analyze the role that people, businesses, and government play in taxation and spending required to maintain the public good.
GV.4.GS.C	• I can compare the various processes pertaining to the selection of political leaders at the federal, state, and local levels.

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Unit 5: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Timeframe: 7 weeks

Unit Description: In this unit, students will explain how the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments were created, and how they limit the power of government, protect individual liberty, and provide for equality under the law. They will explore the historical context in which these amendments were created and how they respond to challenges faced by society. Students will also examine landmark Supreme Court cases that have interpreted these amendments and shaped the balance between individual rights and government authority.

Enduring Understandings:

- The Bill of Rights and other amendments to the U.S. Constitution are specifically designed to limit the government's power.
- The government works to protect individual freedoms and ensure equality for all citizens through specific constitutional amendments and policy decisions.
- Democratic societies must balance the rights and responsibilities of individuals with the common good.
- When the government makes decisions, even those with planned outcomes for society, they often result in unplanned consequences that can impact individuals and groups.

Essential Questions:

- How do the Bill of Rights and other amendments to the Constitution limit the government's power?
- How does the government protect our freedom and ensure everyone is treated fairly?
- What is meant by rights are relative and not absolute?
- What happens when public interest and individual liberties clash?

Unit 5 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
Unit 1 Standards	Including standards from Unit 1: GV.1.CC.A , GV.1.EC.A , GV.1.PC.A , GV.1.PC.B ,
Unit 2 Standards	Including standards from Unit 2: GV.1.CC.B , GV.1.G.A, GV.3.GS.F
Unit 3 Standards	Including standards from Unit 3: GV.1.CC.B , GV.1.CC.C , GV.1.CC.D , GV.1.GS.B , GV.3.PC.B, GV.4.CC.C
Unit 4 Standards	Including standards from Unit 4: GV.1.GS.A

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<u>GV.1.CC.E</u>	• I can analyze the causes and consequences of a specific issue tied to government, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.
GV.3.GS.E	• I can explain how the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments limit the power of government, protect individual liberty, and provide for equality under the law.
GV.3.PC.B	• I can evaluate the intended and unintended impact of government decision-making on individuals, groups, and society.
GV.4.PC.C	• I can predict the consequences that occur when institutions fail to meet the needs of individuals and groups, and when individuals fail to carry out their personal responsibilities.

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Unit 6: Foreign Policy

Timeframe: 3-5 weeks

Unit Description: Students will analyze international relations, focusing on how nations with differing goals and perspectives interact on the global stage. They will analyze U.S. foreign policy decisions and the intended and unintended consequences of these actions, as well as the role of international organizations in addressing global issues. By evaluating multiple perspectives, students will develop a critical understanding of power, diplomacy, and the challenges and opportunities of international cooperation.

Enduring Understandings:

- Understanding how foreign policy decisions are made and put into action is a key part of analyzing the United States' role in the world.
- A major focus in foreign policy is to determine and understand how American interests are protected, both within the country and globally.
- Students will learn about the connection between a nation's "national interest" and the specific foreign policy choices it makes.
- Nations engage with one another based on different perspectives and objectives.
- U.S. foreign policy decisions can produce both intended and unintended outcomes.
- International organizations play a key role in guiding and supporting global interactions.

Essential Questions:

- How are foreign policy decisions made and implemented?
- How are American interests safeguarded at home and abroad?
- How does the national interest shape foreign policy decisions?
- How involved should the U.S. or other governments be in the affairs of foreign governments?
- In what ways do differing viewpoints on international relations shape how governments engage with one another?
- How do actors in international relations apply various forms of power to affect the decisions and actions of others?

Unit 6 Standards	
STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
Unit 1 Standards	Including standards from Unit 1: GV.1.CC.A , GV.1.EC.A , GV.1.PC.A , GV.1.PC.B ,
Unit 2 Standards	Including standards from Unit 2: GV.1.CC.B , GV.1.G.A, GV.3.GS.F
Unit 3 Standards	Including standards from Unit 3: GV.1.CC.B , GV.1.CC.C , GV.1.CC.D , GV.1.GS.B , GV.3.PC.B, GV.4.CC.C
Unit 4 Standards	Including standards from Unit 4: GV.1.GS.A

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Unit 5 Standards	Including standards from Unit 5: GV.1.GS.A
GV.1.CC.A	• I can use tools to analyze a chronological sequence of events related to a study of government
GV.1.CC.B	• I can explain connections between the historical context and people's perspectives about government at the time.
GV.1.G.A	• I can use maps and other graphic representations in order to explain relationships and reveal patterns or trends about government.
GV.3.PC.B	• I can evaluate the intended and unintended impact of government decision-making on individuals, groups, and society.
GV.3.GS.C	• I can analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government to determine how they function and interact.
GV.4.CC.A	• I can trace the changing power relationships between branches of the United States government over time.

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