

Black Horse Pike Regional School District
Highland, Timber Creek, Triton
Social Studies Department
Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics

This course is for capable, self-motivated students who wish to stimulate their intellectual curiosity and who are considering taking the Advanced Placement Exam in US Government and Politics. The study of modern politics in the United States requires students to examine the kind of government established by the Constitution, paying particular attention to the government institutions, federalism, the separation of powers, and checks and balances. Students will explore why U.S. citizens hold certain beliefs about politics, and how families, schools, and the media act to perpetuate or change these beliefs. Understanding the ways in which political culture affects and informs political participation is also critical. For example, students will learn that individuals often engage in multiple forms of political participation, including voting, protest, and mass movements. Students will examine the significance of the historical evolution of the U.S. party system, the functions and structures of political parties, and the effects they have on the political process. An understanding of United States politics includes the study of the development of individual rights and liberties and their impact on citizens. Basic to this study is an analysis of the workings of the United States Supreme Court and familiarity with its most significant decisions.

Goals

Students successfully completing this course will master the following skills:

- Understand important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics.
- Recognize typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures).
- Be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics (including data presented in charts, tables, and other formats).
- Be able to critically analyze relevant theories and concepts, apply them appropriately, and develop their connections across the curriculum.

To help students meet these goals, the course will cover the following “Big Ideas.” “Big Ideas” The big ideas described below are intended to illustrate distinctive features and processes in U.S. government and politics as well as how political scientists study political behavior.

I. Constitutionalism (CON): The U.S. Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances among branches of government and allocates power between federal and state governments. This system is based on the rule of law and the balance majority rule and minority rights.

II. Liberty and Order (LOR): Governmental laws and policies balancing order and liberty are based on the U.S. Constitution and have been interpreted differently over time.

III. Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD): Popular sovereignty, individualism, and republicanism are important considerations of U.S. laws and policy making and assume citizens will engage and participate.

IV. Competing Policy-Making Interests (PMI): Multiple actors and institutions interact to produce and implement possible policies.

V. Methods of Political Analysis (MPA): Using various types of analyses, political scientists measure how U.S. political behavior, attitudes, ideologies, and institutions are shaped by a number of factors over time.

Course Expectations and Skills- The College Board prescribes that students will develop the following skills through the exploration of the course content:

Skill Category 1- Concept Application- Apply political concepts and processes to scenarios in context.			
1.A- Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. 1.B- Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. 1.C- Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. 1.D- Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context. 1.E- Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context			
Skill Category 2- SCOTUS Application- Apply Supreme Court decisions.			
2.A- Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases. 2.B- Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources. 2.C- Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compared to a non-required Supreme Court case. 2.D- Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a relevant political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.			
Skill Category 3- Data Analysis- Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics.			
3.A- Describe the data presented. 3.B- Describe patterns and trends in data. 3.C- Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions. 3.D- Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. 3.E- Explain possible limitations of the data provided. 3.F- Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.			
Skill Category 4- Source Analysis- Read, analyze, and interpret foundational documents and other text-based and visual sources.			
4.A- Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source. 4.B- Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. 4.C- Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors. 4.D- Explain how the visual elements of the source (a cartoon, map, or infographic) illustrate or relate to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.			
Skill Category 5- Argumentation- Develop an argument in essay format.			
5.A- Articulate a defensible claim/thesis. 5.B- Support an argument or claim/ thesis using relevant evidence. 5.C- Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis. 5.D- Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation.			

Month(M.P.)	Unit	Topics(s)	NJSLS -Social Studies
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September(MP1)	Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy	The Political Landscape, The Constitution	6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.a 6.1.12.CivicsPD.2.a 6.1.12.HistoryCC.2.b
October(MP1)	Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy	The Constitution Cont., Federalism	6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.c 6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.a
November(MP1&2)	Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government	Congress, The Presidency	6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.c
December(MP2)	Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government	The Executive Branch and the Federal Bureaucracy, The Judiciary	6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.c 6.1.12.HistoryCC.14.b
January(MP2&3)	Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	Civil Liberties and Civil Rights	6.1.12.CivicsDP.13.a 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.c 6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.c
February(MP3)	Unit 4: American Political Ideologies and Beliefs	Public Opinion and Political Socialization, Domestic and Economic Policy	6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a 6.1.12.EconNE.14.a 6.1.12.EconET.14.a
March(MP 3&4)	Unit 5: Political Participation	Political Parties, Voting and Elections, The Campaign Process	6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsCM.14.a 6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a
April(MP4)	Unit 5: Political Participation & A.P Review	The News Media, Interest Groups, Review	6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a 6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.a
May(MP4)	A.P. Review	Review, Required Final Project	6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a 6.1.12.EconNE.14.a
June(MP4)	A.P. Review	Required Final Project(Described Below)	6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.c 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a 6.1.12.EconNE.14.a

Required Final Project

Below you will find options for the project required by the College Board. The required project adds a civic component to the course, engaging students in exploring how they can affect, and are affected by, government and politics throughout their lives. The project might have students collect data on a teacher-approved political science topic, participate in a community service activity, or observe and report on the policymaking process of a governing body. Students should plan a presentation that relates their experiences or findings to what they are learning in the course.

- **OPTION 1: What if?**

Description: Identify a point of divergence in American Political history. Change that moment. From that critical moment consider both the immediate impact of the change and the long-term consequences on modern society.

You will present your “revised history” in June through the creation of “new” primary sources and a multimedia project.

- **OPTION 2: Jaywalking**

Description: Over the course of this year you have become, relative to the general population, experts on United States Government and Politics. We have engaged in study that was thematically arranged in the following categories: (1) Foundations of American Democracy, (2) Interactions Among Branches of Government, (3) Civil Liberties and Civil Rights, (4) American Political Ideologies and Beliefs, and (5) Political Participation. In this project you will interview member of the school population and ask them relatively simple questions from our topics of study this year. You will produce a best of video in the format of Jay Leno’s “Jaywalking” sketches. Ultimately you will present your video and the results of a broader survey on Government knowledge in June.

- **OPTION 3: Interest Group Project**

Description: The power of the vote is not the only way citizens can influence the government. Protest, campaigning, correspondence, referendums, recalls, initiatives, are all examples we have explored throughout this AP US Government and Politics course. Interest Groups, however, can be one of the most effective methods of achieving change in Government, Policy, and/or Law. This project challenges you to create an Interest Group with aspirations of changing some aspect of society. Questions to consider: What is the mission of your organization. How will you promote your group? What strategies and tactics will you use to accomplish your mission? How will you attract members? How will the group be successful?

- **OPTION 4: Experiential Learning Project**

Description: This option is for students who are already actively engaged in the political process. The Experiential Learning Project is an opportunity to share your citizenship experience. Reflecting on your exposure to the Government and/or Politics and expanding on your understanding through extended research you will write a paper and present paper in June.

Materials Needed

- Covered textbook
- Chromebook
- Headphones that plug into your Chromebook
- Daily planner/Student organizer
- Pen or pencil

Text Resources

- *Textbook: American Government, Roots and Reform: 2020 Presidential Election Edition, AP Edition.* O’Connor, Sabato. Pearson. 2022 Boston, Massachusetts.
 - Pearson Online Text:
 - Code:
- *AP Government and Politics: Premium, 2025, Barron’s*
- *Crash Course: AP U.S. Government and Politics.* Fenton, Nancy; Olson-Goldman. Educational Research Association. 2020 Canbury, New Jersey.
- <https://myap.collegeboard.org/>

Required Supplemental Resources (The following documents have been designated as required by the College Board and therefore will be covered in depth over the course of the year. Note: Additional supplemental documents will be added to enhance understanding of these documents are their place in United States Government and Politics).

Supreme Court Cases

- MARBURY V. MADISON (1803)
- MCCULLOCH V. MARYLAND (1819)
- SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES (1919)
- BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954)
- BAKER V. CARR (1962)
- ENGEL V. VITALE (1962)
- GIDEON V. WAINWRIGHT (1963)
- TINKER V. DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (1969)

- NEW YORK TIMES CO. V. UNITED STATES (1971)
- WISCONSIN V. YODER (1972)
- SHAW V. RENO (1993)
- UNITED STATES V. LOPEZ (1995)
- MCDONALD V. CHICAGO (2010)
- CITIZENS UNITED V. FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (2010)

Required Foundational Documents

- THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION
- BRUTUS NO.1
- THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES (INCLUDING THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS)
- THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
- EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION
- FEDERALIST NO. 10
- FEDERALIST NO. 39
- FEDERALIST NO. 51
- FEDERALIST NO. 70
- FEDERALIST NO. 78
- GETTYSBURG ADDRESS (BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN)
- "LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL" (BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.)
- CORE PRINCIPLES FROM ADAM SMITH'S "THE WEALTH OF NATIONS"

Grading Scale

Students will earn their grades based on the following categories of assignments:

- Major Assessments: 45% - Projects: 15%
- Minor Assessments: 25% - Homework/Classwork: 15%

Black Horse Pike Regional School District

Where inspiring excellence is our standard and student achievement is the result.

AP US Government and Politics

Unit # 1

Foundations of American Democracy

Updated: August 2026

Unit Overview:

The study of modern politics in the United States requires students to examine the kind of government established by the Constitution, paying particular attention to federalism, the separation of powers, and checks and balances. Understanding these developments involves both knowledge of the historical situation at the time of the Constitutional Convention and an awareness of the ideological and philosophical traditions on which the framers drew. Such understanding addresses specific concerns of the framers: for example, why did Madison fear factions? What were the reasons for the swift adoption of the Bill of Rights? Familiarity with the United States Supreme Court's interpretation of key provisions of the Constitution will aid student understanding of theoretical and practical features of federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances. Students should be familiar with a variety of theoretical perspectives relating to the Constitution, such as democratic theory, theories of republican government, pluralism, and elitism.

Essential Questions

1. How did the founders of the U.S. Constitution attempt to protect individual liberty, while also promoting public order and safety?
2. How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the U.S. Constitutional system?
3. How does the development and interpretation of the Constitution influence policies that impact citizens and residents of the U.S.?

Enduring Understandings

1. CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS
 - a. Government by the people and for the people is the basis for a democratic society in the United States.
 - b. The US Constitution is the product of ideas and compromises that are still debated today.
 - c. The framers of the Constitution intended for a separation of governmental powers with checks and balances to keep one branch from becoming more powerful than the others.
2. THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE
 - a. Politics is the study of who gets what, where, when and

	how. b. There are many factors that determine who sets the policy agendas in government. c. Citizens are empowered and encouraged to become involved in the decision making process through linkage institutions. 3. FEDERALISM a. Federalism: a political system in which power is divided and shared between the national/central government and the states b. The Framers worked to create a political system that was halfway between the failed confederation of the Articles of Confederation and the tyrannical unitary system of Great Britain. c. They established a system known as federalism, though that word does not appear anywhere in the Constitution. Federalism is based on the sovereignty of the people who delegate power to both the central and state governments. d. The national government and the state governments were to have certain powers in common and their own sets of officials and each government was to be supreme in some spheres. e. The questions of state and federal sovereignty and power are still debated in the 21st century.
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Vocabulary (Key Terms) - Tier 2 and 3

Tier 2- Analyze, Argue, Assert, Authority, Compare, Consequence, Constrain, Contrast, Demonstrate, Derive, Distribute, Emphasize, Establish, Evaluate, Evidence, Examine, Explicit, Imply, Interpret, Justify, Perspective, Principle, Undermine.

Tier 3- Anti-Federalist, Block grant, Categorical grant, Checks and balances, Commerce Clause, Concurrent powers, Confederation, Constitutional Convention, Cooperative federalism, Devolution, Due Process Clause, Enumerated powers, Equal Protection Clause, Exclusive powers, Faction, Federalism, Impeachment, Implied powers, Interstate commerce, Judicial interpretation, Federal court system, Natural rights, Necessary and Proper Clause, Participatory democracy, Pluralist democracy, Popular sovereignty, Ratification, Representative democracy, Republicanism, Reserved powers, Separation of powers, Social contract, Supremacy Clause

Unit Learning Targets/Goals/Outcomes:

Learning Target	NJSLS -Social Studies	NJSLS-ELA
1. Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. 2. Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, events, or debates in the U.S. 3. Explain how Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy are reflected in U.S. foundational documents. 4. Explain the relationship between key provisions of the Articles of Confederation and the debate over granting the federal government greater power formerly reserved to the states. 5. Explain the impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system. 6. Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances. 7. Explain the implications of separation of powers and checks and balances for the U.S. political system. 8. Explain how societal needs affect the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments. 9. Explain how the balance of power between national and state governments has been interpreted differently over time. 10. Explain how the distribution of powers among three federal branches and between national and state governments impacts policy making.	1. 6.1.12.HistoryCC.2.b 2. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.a 3. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.3.a 4. 6.1.12.CivicsPD.2.a 5. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.b 6. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b 7. 6.1.12.GeoPP.2.a 8. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.3.b 9. 6.1.12.CivicsPR.2.a	1. L.SS.11–12.1.a 2. L.KL.11–12.2.a 3. L.KL.11–12.2.b 4. L.KL.11–12.2.c 5. L.VL.11–12.3.a 6. L.VL.11–12.3.d 7. L.VI.11–12.4.b 8. RI.CR.11–12.1. 9. RI.CI.11–12.2. 10. RI.TS.11–12.4. 11. RI.MF.11–12.6. 12. RI.AA.11–12.7. 13. RI.CT.11–12.8. 14. W.AW.11–12.1.a 15. W.AW.11–12.1.b 16. SL.PE.11–12.1.a 17. SL.PI.11–12.4 18. SL.AS.11–12.6.

Unit Resources:

Lesson Resources	Text Resources	Technology & Online Resources
• Political Landscape Presentation • Functions of Government Activity (1&2) • Functions of Government Activity (3&4) • Locke and Hobbes Activity • Political Culture Collage • Analytical Reading Activity 1.1 College Board • State of Nature Do Now • The Constitution Presentation • Articles of Confederation Simulation • Formal vs. Informal Amendment	Secondary: • Textbook: American Government, Roots and Reform: 2020 Presidential Election Edition, AP Edition. O'Connor, Sabato. Pearson. 2022 Boston, Massachusetts. • AP Government and Politics: Premium, 2025, Barron's • Crash Course: AP U.S. Government and Politics. Fenton, Nancy; Olson-Goldman. Educational Research	• https://myap.collegeboard.org/ • https://streetlaw.org/ • https://constitutioncenter.org/education

Activity • Preamble Activity • How an Impeachment Process Inquiry Works • Constitution GRQs • Federalism Presentation • Federalist vs. Anti-Federalists • Analytical Reading Activity 1.3 College Board • Analytical Reading Activity 1.4 College Board • Analytical Reading Activity 1.6 College Board • Analytical Reading Activity 1.7 College Board • Analytical Reading Activity 1.8 College Board • Federalism Presentation • Federalism Flow Chart • Federalism Timeline • Street Law Federalism Activities	Association. 2020 Canbury, New Jersey. Primary • U.S. Constitution • Declaration of Independence • Articles of Confederation • Brutus No. 1 • Federalist No. 10 • Federalist No. 39 • Federalist No. 51 • McCulloch v. Maryland (1819) • United States v. Lopez (1995)	
List of Accommodations and Modifications • Special Education • 504 Students • At Risk Students • ELL • Gifted and Talented		

Assessments:	
Formative	Summative
Homework: Notes sections of the textbook, online lectures and completion of essential questions, key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding, creating) Quizzes: Key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding) Writing Assignments: FRQ's from this unit, create your own	Chapter quizzes (remembering, understanding) Unit tests (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit FRQs (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit projects (applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) Evaluation of interactive discussion and debate (analyzing, evaluating)

amendment, response to Founding Documents (remembering, understanding, applying, evaluating)
Participation: in discussions, debates, and simulations (understanding, analyzing, evaluating)
Role Playing: Congress under the Articles of Confederation (understanding, applying, analyzing, creating)
Posters: Amendments (understanding, creating)
Power Points, Google Slides: Project presentations (applying, evaluating, creating)
Panel Discussions: What does it mean to be a good citizen? (applying, evaluation)

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts

- FRQ writing, reading required primary source documents , reading the Constitution of the United States

Mathematics

- Analysis of charts and graphs related to government policy issues.

Science

- Assessing the government's role in regulating scientific research

Art

- Interpreting political cartoons and government programs aimed at fostering the arts

Technology and 21st Century Themes & Skills

- Utilizing the AP US Government and Politics partnership with The Constitution Center in Philadelphia and the internet sources provide, Google Classroom, Government Websites, etc.

Computer Science

- Utilizing the AP US Government and Politics partnership with The Constitution Center in Philadelphia and the internet sources provide, Google Classroom, Government Websites, etc.

History

- Tracing historical developments and the impact of those changes on the American form of government.

State Mandates and Resources

- [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#)
- [Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills](#)
- [Amistad Law](#)
- [NJ Amistad Commission Interactive Curriculum](#)
- [Holocaust Law](#)
- [NJ Commission on Holocaust Education Curriculum Guide and Materials](#)
- [LGBT and Disabilities Law](#)
- [Career Ready Practices \(BHPRSD\)](#)
- [Asian and Pacific Islander](#)
- [Climate Change](#)

Black Horse Pike Regional School District

Where inspiring excellence is our standard and student achievement is the result.

AP US Government and Politics

Unit # 2

Interactions Among Branches of Government

Updated: August 2026

Unit Overview:

The United States Constitution addresses the powers of the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches in Articles I, II and III. This unit will examine how the institutions of government are designed to function and will evaluate theoretical v. practical applications in our present government. Members of Congress serve dual roles. On the one hand, they are law and policy makers, and on the other, they represent the needs and best interests of their particular constituents. A president must not only be able to exercise constitutional powers but unwritten ones as well. The ability of a president to use the symbols of office and bring the nation together is often at least as important as the powers laid out in Article II. The members of the bureaucracy implement the laws and regulations created by Congress and the President. These bureaucrats provide essential services from issuing social security checks to inspecting passengers and luggage at airports and many other tasks. The Supreme Court and the federal court system have a number of powers and some significant limitations. And the courts continue to change today.

Essential Questions

The Legislative Branch

1. What does the US Constitution say about the legislative branch?
2. What kinds of people make up Congress?
3. How is Congress organized?
4. What are the most significant powers of Congress?
5. What factors influence how members of Congress make decisions?
6. What is the relationship between Congress, the President, and the courts?
7. The Executive Branch
8. What are the provisions for choosing and replacing presidents?

Enduring Understandings

The Legislative Branch

1. The most important constitutional power of Congress is the power to make laws. This power is shared by the House and the Senate. In order to become a law, a bill must be passed by both the House and the Senate.
2. The House and Senate operate differently as well. The House, being a much larger body, tends to be more formal and centralized and has stronger leadership.
3. The House has 435 members, and all money bills must originate in the House. The Senate has 100 members and provides advice and consent on presidential appointments and treaties

9. What are the constitutional powers of the president?
10. How has presidential power expanded over time?
11. How important is public opinion in presidential decision making?
12. How does the president make policy?

The Bureaucracy

13. How has the federal bureaucracy grown and developed throughout history?
14. What is the structure of the modern bureaucracy?
15. How does the bureaucracy make policy?
16. How does the bureaucracy relate to congress, the president, interest groups and the public?

The Judiciary

17. What are the origins of the federal judiciary and judicial review?
18. What are the main components of the American legal system?
19. How is the federal court system organized?
20. How are federal judges selected?
21. What is the Supreme Court's process for accepting, hearing, and deciding cases?
22. What kinds of factors influence judicial decision making?
23. What role does the Supreme Court play in the policy-making process?

with a two-thirds vote.

4. Most of the work of Congress takes place in committees. Committees are controlled by the majority party and often set the congressional agenda.
5. The president actively courts members of Congress to vote his way and really can set the agenda for Congressional discussions.

The Executive Branch

6. A president must not only be able to exercise constitutional powers but unwritten ones as well.
7. The president received certain enumerated powers in the Constitution.
8. In the twentieth century, the presidency has become ever more powerful, beginning with FDR who served four terms during two huge national crises: the Great Depression and WWII.
9. The president must persuade not only Congress but also public opinion. Presidential popularity has become very important particularly in the relations between the president and Congress.

The Bureaucracy

10. In addition to the President, the Executive Branch consists of a complex hierarchy of administrative organizations.
11. Increasing citizen demand for services, led to the expansion of the federal bureaucracy.
12. Most government employees are part of the civil service. That means they take a test and are hired, at least in part, based on their test scores
13. Governments exist for the public good, not for profit.
14. Understand what bureaucracies are, how they operate, who staffs them, and why they exist.
15. Understanding of the historical roots of our bureaucracy.
16. Consider whether the bureaucracy an unelected 'fourth branch' of government that is too large, too powerful, and too unaccountable?

The Judiciary

17. As with the rest of the Constitution, Article III was the result of compromise.
18. Congress established "inferior courts" through the Judiciary Act of 1789. This Act established the federal judiciary in the same three-tiered structure we know today.
19. Judicial review is the power to decide if a law or other legal issue contravenes the Constitution, and overturn it. This power

	is not mentioned in the Constitution. 20. There are two basic types of jurisdiction: original and appellate. 21. The U.S. Supreme Court reviews cases from lower courts and acts as the final interpreter of the U.S. Constitution. 22. The selection of judges is a very political process. Judges are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Often presidents solicit suggestions from members of the House of Representatives, Senators, their political party, and others. 23. Judicial Restraint vs. Judicial Activism: the former advocates minimalist roles (strict construction) for the unelected court system, and the latter feels that judges should use the law to promote justice, equality, and personal liberty (judicial activism). 24. Court decisions always refer to previous legal decisions—ours is a system of precedents and stare decisis. So it is often difficult to overturn a bad precedent, but it does happen.
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Vocabulary (Key Terms) - Tier 2 and 3

Tier 2- Accountable, Allocate, Authorize, Compel, Constrain, Delegate, Discretion, Dispute, Enforce, Exceed, Implement, Influence, Interpret, Justify, Limit, Oversee, Override, Precedent, Reconcile, Regulate, Restrain, Undermine

Tier 3- Advice and consent, Agenda Setting, Appellate Jurisdiction, Apportionment, Appropriation, Bicameral Legislature, Bully Pulpit, Bureaucratic Discretion, Civil Service, Cloture, Committee System, Congressional Oversight, Constituency, Constitutional Interpretation, Dissenting Opinion, Divided Government, Discretionary Spending, Executive Agreement, Executive Department, Executive Order, Executive Privilege, Federal Bureaucracy, Formal Powers, Gerrymandering, Gridlock, Impeachment, Incumbency, Independent Regulatory Commission, Informal Powers, Jurisdiction, Judicial Activism, Judicial Appointment, Judicial Restraint, Judicial Review, Life Tenure, Logrolling, Majority Opinion, Mandatory Spending, Original Jurisdiction, Polarization, Policymaking, Policy Implementation, Pocket Veto, Pork-Barrel Legislation, Power Of The Purse, Precedent, Redistricting, Regulation, Signing Statement, Stakeholder, Standing Committee, Stare Decisis, Treaty, Veto

Unit Learning Targets/Goals/Outcomes:

Learning Target	NJSLS -Social Studies	NJSLS-ELA
1. Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.	1. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.a	1. L.SS.11–12.1.a
2. Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policy- making process.	2. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.b	2. L.KL.11–12.2.a
3. Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes,	3. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.a	3. L.KL.11–12.2.b
	4. 6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a	4. L.KL.11–12.2.c
	5. 6.1.12.HistoryCC.14.b	5. L.VL.11–12.3.a

partisanship, and divided government. 4. Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda. 5. Explain how the president's agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress. 6. Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers. 7. Explain how communication technology has changed the president's relationship with the national constituency and the other branches. 8. Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other institutions and state governments. 9. Explain how the exercise of judicial review in conjunction with life tenure can lead to debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court's power. 10. Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court's power. 11. Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government. 12. Explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rulemaking and implementation. 13. Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch. 14. Explain how the president ensures that executive branch agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities in concert with the goals of the administration. 15. Explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts	6. 6.1.12.HistoryCC.12.a 7. 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a 8. 6.1.12.CivicsPR.2.a 9. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.d	6. L.VL.11–12.3.d 7. L.VI.11–12.4.b 8. RI.CR.11–12.1. 9. RI.CI.11–12.2. 10. RI.TS.11–12.4. 11. RI.MF.11–12.6. 12. RI.AA.11–12.7. 13. RI.CT.11–12.8. 14. W.AW.11–12.1.a 15. W.AW.11–12.1.b 16. SL.PE.11–12.1.a 17. SL.PI.11–12.4 18. SL.AS.11–12.6.
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Unit Resources:

Lesson Resources	Text Resources	Technology & Online Resources
• Congress Presentation • Congress Webquest • Gerrymandering Activity • Committee Activity Do Now • Filibuster Activity • How a Bill becomes a Law Activity • Congress Current Event • The Presidency Presentation	Secondary: • Textbook: American Government, Roots and Reform: 2020 Presidential Election Edition, AP Edition. O'Connor, Sabato. Pearson. 2022 Boston, Massachusetts. • AP Government and Politics: Premium, 2025, Barron's	• https://myap.collegeboard.org/ • https://streetlaw.org/ • https://constitutioncenter.org/education

- Executive Privilege and Immunity Activity - Youngstown Activity - Imperial Presidency Activity - Analytical Reading Activity 2.6 College Board - Bureaucracy Presentation - Iron Triangle - Hatch Act Activity - Agency Activity - Judiciary Presentation - Analytical Reading Activity 2.8 College Board - Strict vs Loose Construction - How to get to SCOTUS - Judiciary Committee Simulation - Granting Cert Activity	- Crash Course: AP U.S. Government and Politics. Fenton, Nancy; Olson-Goldman. Educational Research Association. 2020 Canbury, New Jersey. Primary - U.S. Constitution - Federalist No. 51 - Federalist No. 70 - Federalist No. 78 - Baker v. Carr (1962) - Shaw v. Reno (1993) - Marbury v. Madison (1803)	
List of Accommodations and Modifications Special Education 504 Students At Risk Students ELL Gifted and Talented		

Assessments:	
Formative	Summative
Homework: Notes sections of the textbook, online lectures and completion of essential questions, key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding, creating) Quizzes: Key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding) Writing Assignments: FRQ's from this unit, create your own amendment, response to Founding Documents (remembering, understanding, applying, evaluating) Participation: in discussions, debates, and simulations (understanding, analyzing, evaluating)	Chapter quizzes (remembering, understanding) Unit tests (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit FRQs (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit projects (applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) Evaluation of interactive discussion and debate (analyzing, evaluating)

Role Playing: Congress under the Articles of Confederation (understanding, applying, analyzing, creating)
Posters: Amendments (understanding, creating)
Power Points, Google Slides: Project presentations (applying, evaluating, creating)
Panel Discussions: What does it mean to be a good citizen? (applying, evaluation)

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts

- FRQ writing, reading required primary source documents , reading the Constitution of the United States

Mathematics

- Analysis of charts and graphs related to government policy issues.

Science

- Assessing the government's role in regulating scientific research

Art

- Interpreting political cartoons and government programs aimed at fostering the arts

Technology and 21st Century Themes & Skills

- Utilizing the AP US Government and Politics partnership with The Constitution Center in Philadelphia and the internet sources provide, Google Classroom, Government Websites, etc.

Computer Science

- Utilizing the AP US Government and Politics partnership with The Constitution Center in Philadelphia and the internet sources provide, Google Classroom, Government Websites, etc.

History

- Tracing historical developments and the impact of those changes on the American form of government.

State Mandates and Resources

- [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#)
- [Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills](#)
- [Amistad Law](#)
- [NJ Amistad Commission Interactive Curriculum](#)

- [Holocaust Law](#)
- [NJ Commission on Holocaust Education Curriculum Guide and Materials](#)
- [LGBT and Disabilities Law](#)
- [Career Ready Practices \(BHPRSD\)](#)
- [Asian and Pacific Islander](#)
- [Climate Change](#)

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AP US Government and Politics

Unit # 3

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Updated: August 2026

Unit Overview:

Civil liberties are the personal rights and freedoms that the federal government cannot abridge, either by law, constitution, or judicial interpretation. Thus, they place limitations on the power of government to restrain or dictate how individuals act. In most cases of civil liberties, the issues are complex. There is often a conflict between individuals or groups attempting to exercise rights and government seeking to control the exercise of some rights in the interests of the rights of others and to keep order. The courts decide how to balance these differing interests.

The term “civil rights” refers to the positive acts governments take to protect individuals against arbitrary or discriminatory treatment by government or individuals. Since the Constitution was written, the conception of civil rights has changed dramatically. The addition of the 14th Amendment after the Civil War made equality a constitutional right by specifying that the states could not “deny any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the laws.” This amendment has generated more litigation than any other constitutional provision. Those seeking equality have used the Constitution and litigation strategies as well as other methods of attaining their goal such as protest, lobbying, civil disobedience, and appeals to public opinion.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were seminal pieces of legislation in the fight for equal rights. The government officials charged with enforcing these laws are housed in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice.

Essential Questions

CIVIL LIBERTIES

1. Where did the idea of civil liberties originate?
2. In what ways does the Bill of Rights guarantee liberty?
3. What are the limitations of liberty and how are these limitations interpreted?
4. What is the extent of our right to privacy?

CIVIL RIGHTS

Enduring Understandings

CIVIL LIBERTIES

1. Liberty is guaranteed by the US Constitution, the Bill of Rights and other constitutional amendments
2. The First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly and petition
3. The courts have established limitations on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition

5. How does the federal government protect the rights of individuals? 6. What kinds of inequalities have impacted African Americans, women and other minorities? 7. How has the federal government responded to challenges of equal protection and due process as guaranteed by the fourteenth amendment? 8. How has the Supreme Court taken an activist role in the protection of civil rights? 9. What current issues exist regarding equality in America?	4. Criminal defendants are guaranteed certain liberties found in the Bill of Rights 5. The right to privacy is subject to certain governmental limitations. 6. Security issues such as terrorism have affected civil liberties in America. CIVIL RIGHTS 7. There is a long history of struggle for African Americans and women to win the right to vote and achieve equality in America. 8. Many groups of Americans are still struggling for equality. 9. The civil rights movement has inspired other organized efforts to bring about government protection of due process and equality. 10. Laws and court decisions have often led to conflict in how the government enforces civil rights. 11. Many groups of Americans have mobilized in pursuit of their own civil rights 12. There is an ongoing debate concerning civil rights and affirmative action
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Vocabulary (Key Terms) - Tier 2 and 3

Tier 2- Advocate, Arbitrary, Assert, Balance, Challenge, Claim, Compare, Compel, Constrain, Deny, Disparity, Distinguish, Evaluate, Evidence, Extent, Implication, Impose, Infringe, Interpret, Justify, Perspective, Prohibit, Restrict, Uphold

Tier 3- Affirmative Action, Bill of Rights, Civil Disobedience, Civil Liberties, Civil Rights, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Cruel and Unusual Punishment, De Facto Segregation, De Jure Segregation, Desegregation, Discrimination, Double Jeopardy, Due Process, Due Process Clause, Eighth Amendment, Equal Protection Clause, Establishment Clause, Exclusionary Rule, Fifth Amendment, First Amendment, Fourteenth Amendment, Fourth Amendment, Free Exercise Clause, Freedom of Assembly, Freedom of Association, Freedom of Press, Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech, Majority-Minority District, Miranda Rule, Prior Restraint, Probable Cause, Procedural Due Process, Racial Gerrymandering, Racial Segregation, Right to Bear Arms, Right to Counsel, Right to Privacy, Search and Seizure, Search Warrant, Second Amendment, Selective Incorporation, "Separate but Equal", Sixth Amendment, Substantive Due Process, Symbolic Speech, Thirteenth Amendment, Unenumerated Rights, Voting Rights Act of 1965

Unit Learning Targets/Goals/Outcomes:

Learning Target	NJSLS -Social Studies	NJSLS-ELA
1. Explain how the U.S. Constitution protects individual liberties and rights.	1. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.a	1. L.SS.11–12.1.a

2. Describe the rights protected in the Bill of Rights. 3. Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to religious liberty. 4. Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to free speech. 5. Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to individual liberty. 6. Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Second Amendment reflects a commitment to individual liberty. 7. Explain how the Supreme Court has attempted to balance claims of individual freedom with laws and enforcement procedures that promote public order and safety. 8. Explain the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation. 9. Explain the extent to which the government is limited by procedural due process from infringing upon individual rights. 10. Explain the extent to which the government is limited by substantive due process from infringing upon individual rights. 11. Explain how constitutional provisions have supported and motivated social movements. 12. Explain how the government has responded to social movements. 13. Explain how the government has at times allowed the restriction of the civil rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights. 14. Describe Supreme Court debates about affirmative action policies.	2. 6.1.12.HistoryCC.2.b 3. 6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.c 4. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.4.a 5. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.4.b 6. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.5.a 7. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.6.a 8. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.6.b 9. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.7.a 10. 6.1.12.CivicsPR.10.a 11. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.11.a 12. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.13.a 13. 6.1.12.HistoryCC.13.c 14. 6.1.12.HistoryCC.4.a	2. L.KL.11–12.2.a 3. L.KL.11–12.2.b 4. L.KL.11–12.2.c 5. L.VL.11–12.3.a 6. L.VL.11–12.3.d 7. L.VI.11–12.4.b 8. RI.CR.11–12.1. 9. RI.CI.11–12.2. 10. RI.TS.11–12.4. 11. RI.MF.11–12.6. 12. RI.AA.11–12.7. 13. RI.CT.11–12.8. 14. W.AW.11–12.1.a 15. W.AW.11–12.1.b 16. SL.PE.11–12.1.a 17. SL.PI.11–12.4 18. SL.AS.11–12.6.
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Unit Resources:

Lesson Resources	Text Resources	Technology & Online Resources
- Civil Liberties Presentation - Flow Charts - Street Law Activities - Student Speech Activity - Freedom of Religion Activity - Civil Liberties Map Activity 2nd Amendment Activity - Miranda Activity - Selective Incorporation Chart - Roe and Dobbs Activity - Civil Rights Presentation	Secondary: - Textbook: American Government, Roots and Reform: 2020 Presidential Election Edition, AP Edition. O'Connor, Sabato. Pearson. 2022 Boston, Massachusetts. - AP Government and Politics: Premium, 2025, Barron's - Crash Course: AP U.S. Government and Politics. Fenton, Nancy; Olson-Goldman. Educational Research	https://myap.collegeboard.org/ https://streetlaw.org/ https://constitutioncenter.org/education

- Analytical Reading Activity 3.10 College Board - Civil Rights, Human Rights Activity - Jim Crow Voter Suppression - CR Act Mini Presentations - Standards of Review Activity	Association. 2020 Canbury, New Jersey. Primary - U.S. Constitution - Articles of Confederation - Emancipation Proclamation - Gettysburg Address - Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" - Schenck v. United States (1919) - Brown v. Board of Education (1954) - Engel v. Vitale (1962) - Gideon v. Wainwright (1963) - Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969) - New York Times Co. v. United States (1971) - Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972) - United States v. Lopez (1995) - McDonald v. Chicago (2010) - Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)	
List of Accommodations and Modifications Special Education 504 Students At Risk Students ELL Gifted and Talented		

Assessments:	
Formative	Summative
Homework: Notes sections of the textbook, online lectures and completion of essential questions, key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding, creating) Quizzes: Key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding)	Chapter quizzes (remembering, understanding) Unit tests (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit FRQs (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit projects (applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) Evaluation of interactive discussion and debate (analyzing,

Writing Assignments: FRQ's from this unit, create your own amendment, response to Founding Documents (remembering, understanding, applying, evaluating) Participation: in discussions, debates, and simulations (understanding, analyzing, evaluating) Role Playing: Congress under the Articles of Confederation (understanding, applying, analyzing, creating) Posters: Amendments (understanding, creating) Power Points, Google Slides: Project presentations (applying, evaluating, creating) Panel Discussions: What does it mean to be a good citizen? (applying, evaluation)	evaluating)
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Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts

- FRQ writing, reading required primary source documents , reading the Constitution of the United States

Mathematics

- Analysis of charts and graphs related to government policy issues.

Science

- Assessing the government's role in regulating scientific research

Art

- Interpreting political cartoons and government programs aimed at fostering the arts

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Computer Science

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History

- Tracing historical developments and the impact of those changes on the American form of government.

State Mandates and Resources

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- [Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills](#)
- [Amistad Law](#)
- [NJ Amistad Commission Interactive Curriculum](#)
- [Holocaust Law](#)
- [NJ Commission on Holocaust Education Curriculum Guide and Materials](#)
- [LGBT and Disabilities Law](#)
- [Career Ready Practices \(BHPRSD\)](#)
- [Asian and Pacific Islander](#)
- [Climate Change](#)

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AP US Government and Politics Unit # 4

American Political Ideologies and Beliefs

Updated: August 2026

Unit Overview:

This unit will focus on America Political Ideologies and Beliefs. American political ideology has transformed over time and plays a major role in the social and economic policies that Americans support, advocate for and adopt. These ideological beliefs are shaped by founding ideals, core values, linkage institutions (i.e., elections, political parties, interest groups, and the media in all its forms), and the changing demographics of citizens. Where individuals fall on the every changing political spectrum influence how the government regulates, legislates, and adjudicates.

Essential Questions

1. How do differing interpretations of core values affect the relationship between citizens and the federal government and that citizens have with each other?
2. How do Family, schools, peers, media, and social environments (including civic and religious organizations) contribute to the development of an individual's political attitudes and values through the process of political socialization.
3. What has been the impact of globalization on U.S. political culture and on the values of other countries?
4. How do the generational and life cycle impact the political socialization that influences an individual's political attitudes?
5. What is the impact of major political events on the development of individual political attitudes?
6. What are the different types and methods used by political scientists when conducting public opinion polling?

Enduring Understandings

1. Citizen beliefs about government are shaped by the intersection of demographics, political culture, and dynamic social change.
2. Public opinion is measured through scientific polling, and the results of public opinion polls influence public policies and institutions.
3. Widely held political ideologies shape policy debates and choices in American policies.

7. How do polls impact elections and policy debates? 8. How are the two major American political parties aligned ideologically? 9. What has been the impact of diversity on the development of public policies over time? 10. Why is balancing individual liberty and stability such a challenge for the U.S. Government? 11. What are the practical differences between liberal and conservative ideologies?	
Vocabulary (Key Terms) - Tier 2 and 3	
Tier 2- Advocate, Analyze, Assess, Bias, Compare, Consensus, Consequence, Contrast, Correlation, Demographic, Determine, Disparity, Distribution, Evaluate, Evidence, Factor, Fluctuate, Influence, Interpret, Justify, Measure, Perspective, Predict, Preference, Principle, Prioritize, Proportion, Reliable, Respondent, Sample, Significant, Tendency, Trend, Valid, Variable Tier 3- Capitalism, Conservatism, Core Political Values, Deficit Spending, Deregulation, Economic Policy, Equality of Opportunity, Exit Poll, Federal Reserve, Fiscal Policy, Free Enterprise, Free-Market Economy, Generational Effect, Globalization, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Ideological Polarization, Individualism, Inflation, Interest Rate, Keynesian Economics, Liberalism, Libertarianism, Life-Cycle Effect, Limited Government, Margin of Error, Monetary Policy, Political Culture, Political Ideology, Political Socialization, Political Spectrum, Public Opinion, Public Opinion Poll, Random Sample, Representative Sample, Rule of Law, Sampling Error, Social Policy, Supply-Side Economics, Tracking Poll, Unemployment	

Unit Learning Targets/Goals/Outcomes:		
Learning Target	NJSLS -Social Studies	NJSLS-ELA
1. Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government. 2. Explain how cultural factors influence political socialization. 3. Explain how social factors impact political ideology. 4. Explain how major political events influence political ideology. 5. Describe the elements of a scientific poll. 6. Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data. 7. Explain how the ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates. 8. Explain how U.S. political culture (e.g., values, attitudes, and beliefs) influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time. 9. Explain how different political ideologies affect the role of government in	1. 6.1.12.CivicsCM.14.a 2. 6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a 3. 6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a 4. 6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.d 5. 6.1.12.EconEM.10.a 6. 6.1.12.EconET.14.a 7. 6.1.12.EconNE.10.b 8. 6.1.12.EconNE.13.b 9. 6.1.12.EconNE.14.a 10. 6.1.12.GeoPP.14.a 11. 6.1.12.HistoryCA.7.a	1. L.SS.11–12.1.a 2. L.KL.11–12.2.a 3. L.KL.11–12.2.b 4. L.KL.11–12.2.c 5. L.VL.11–12.3.a 6. L.VL.11–12.3.d 7. L.VI.11–12.4.b 8. RI.CR.11–12.1. 9. RI.CI.11–12.2. 10. RI.TS.11–12.4. 11. RI.MF.11–12.6.

regulating the marketplace. 10. Explain how fiscal and monetary policy actions influence economic conditions. 11. Explain how political ideologies vary on the role of the government in addressing social issues. 12. Explain how different ideologies impact policy on social issues.	12. 6.1.12.HistoryUP.13.a 13. 6.1.12.HistoryUP.16.a	12. RI.AA.11–12.7. 13. RI.CT.11–12.8. 14. W.AW.11–12.1.a 15. W.AW.11–12.1.b 16. SL.PE.11–12.1.a 17. SL.PI.11–12.4 18. SL.AS.11–12.6.
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Unit Resources:

Lesson Resources	Text Resources	Technology & Online Resources
- Public Opinion and Political Socialization Presentation - Breaking: Major Poll Update!!! Push and Poll - Political Socialization Inventory - Analytical Reading Activity 4.1	Secondary: - Textbook: American Government, Roots and Reform: 2020 Presidential Election Edition, AP Edition. O'Connor, Sabato. Pearson. 2022 Boston, Massachusetts. - AP Government and Politics: Premium, 2025, Barron's - Crash Course: AP U.S. Government and Politics. Fenton, Nancy; Olson-Goldman. Educational Research Association. 2020 Canbury, New Jersey. Primary - U.S. Constitution - Federalist No. 10 - Core Principles from Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations - Marbury v. Madison - Schenck v. United States - Brown v. Board of Education - Engel v. Vitale - Tinker v. Des Moines - Wisconsin v. Yoder - McDonald v. Chicago	https://myap.collegeboard.org/ https://streetlaw.org/ https://constitutioncenter.org/education

List of Accommodations and Modifications

- [Special Education](#)
- [504 Students](#)
- [At Risk Students](#)
- [ELL](#)
- [Gifted and Talented](#)

Assessments:

Formative

Homework: Notes sections of the textbook, online lectures and completion of essential questions, key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding, creating)

Quizzes: Key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding)

Writing Assignments: FRQ's from this unit, create your own amendment, response to Founding Documents (remembering, understanding, applying, evaluating)

Participation: in discussions, debates, and simulations (understanding, analyzing, evaluating)

Role Playing: Congress under the Articles of Confederation (understanding, applying, analyzing, creating)

Posters: Amendments (understanding, creating)

Power Points, Google Slides: Project presentations (applying, evaluating, creating)

Panel Discussions: What does it mean to be a good citizen? (applying, evaluation)

Summative

Chapter quizzes (remembering, understanding)

Unit tests (remembering, applying, analyzing)

Unit FRQs (remembering, applying, analyzing)

Unit projects (applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating)

Evaluation of interactive discussion and debate (analyzing, evaluating)

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts

- FRQ writing, reading required primary source documents, reading the Constitution of the United States

Mathematics

- Analysis of charts and graphs related to government policy issues.

Science

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State Mandates and Resources

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- [Holocaust Law](#)
- [NJ Commission on Holocaust Education Curriculum Guide and Materials](#)
- [LGBT and Disabilities Law](#)
- [Career Ready Practices \(BHPRSD\)](#)
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AP US Government and Politics

Unit # 5

Political Participation

Updated: August 2026

Unit Overview:

In the modern United States, four types of groups, known as "LINKAGE" INSTITUTIONS, play a vital role in connecting citizens to the government. They are not officially a part of the government, but without them, a democracy would be very difficult to maintain. Political Parties - At the most basic level, a political party is a group of office holders, candidates, activists, and voters who identify with a group label and seek to elect to public office individuals who run under that label. Campaigns and Elections - Elections serve to make governments legitimate, filling public offices and organizing governments. Elections allow people with different views and policy agendas to come to power. Elections also ensure that a government remains accountable to the people. The Media - The media are the wide array of organizations through which information is collected and disseminated to the public including print, movies, television, radio, and the Internet. Interest Groups - Interest groups are a way for citizens to access the government through organization, activism and "strength in numbers". There are large national interest groups, such as AARP as well as small community organizations that seek to influence the policy decisions made by elected officials.

Essential Questions

POLITICAL PARTIES

1. How did American politics become a two party system?
2. What are the party structures on the national, state and local levels?
3. In what ways do political parties involve citizens and voters?
4. How do people acquire their political ideologies?
5. What roles do third and minor parties play in American politics?

CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

6. What role do people play in political campaigns?
7. How do candidates raise money to fund campaigns?

Enduring Understandings

POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Our system contains two major parties: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party.
2. Parties are made up of three types of "members", governmental party: the office holders and candidates, organizational party: workers and activists and, party-in-the-electorate: those who vote for the party or consider themselves to be allied or associated with it.
3. The National Party: The national party creates a vision for party identifiers and is headed by national party chairperson.

8. What is the relationship between the media and political campaigns?
9. What are the procedures for presidential and general elections?
10. How do presidential and congressional elections differ?
11. What kinds of factors influence voter choice?
12. What kinds of factors influence voter turnout?
13. Why is voter turnout low and what steps are being taken to improve turnout?

THE MEDIA

14. How has the news media in the United States developed?
15. What are the trends in the news media today?
16. How does the federal government regulate the news media?
17. How does the news media cover politics?
18. In what ways does the news media influence the public?

INTEREST GROUPS

19. How did interest groups emerge as a political force in American government?
20. What strategies and tactics are used by organized interests in American politics?
21. What factors make an interest group successful?
22. How can efforts be geared toward regulating interest groups and lobbyists?

4. Parties are structurally based at the state and local levels. Much of the work of the party is carried out at the precinct, city, county, and state levels.
5. American voters identify with a party but rarely belong to it.
6. Party loyalties generally come from one's parents, but can be affected by a number of factors such as peers, charismatic personalities, cataclysmic events, and intense social issues.
7. Third parties play a valuable role in American politics. They popularize new ideas, serve as vehicles of popular discontent, induce change in the major parties, assist party realignments, and allow the expression of dissent and opposition.

CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

8. Campaigns start long before most of us notice them.
9. Campaign organizations spend tons of money on consultants, pollsters, and professionals. Campaigns are precisely manipulated, candidates are "handled," and appearances are scripted.
10. The expense of elections and the possibility of corruption, especially individuals and groups with lots of money gaining undue influence on the democratic process, have led to numerous attempts at regulating campaign finance.
11. Elections serve to make governments legitimate, filling public offices and organizing governments.
12. Elections allow people with different views and policy agendas to come to power.
13. Elections ensure that a government remains accountable to the people.
14. Once the parties have chosen their candidates, the general election is held. The general election is a contest between parties and fills a public office.
15. Voter turnout in American elections is lower than the average industrialized democracy.

THE MEDIA

16. The mass media are the wide array of organizations through which information is collected and disseminated to the public including print, movies, television, radio, and the Internet.
17. Fewer people are reading the print media, and we get less diversity in coverage as well. Forty years ago, most major metropolitan areas had competition among newspapers.
18. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is an independent regulatory agency that oversees electronic media.

	It oversees radio, television, telegraph, satellite, and foreign communications in the United States. 19. media can affect the way the public views government and politicians INTEREST GROUPS 20. Many early interest groups were single-issue groups deeply rooted in Christian revivalism and concerned with issues such as temperance (anti-alcohol), peace, education, and slavery. 21. Interest groups allow individuals to gather together to multiply their political power. 22. Groups often claim credit for “winning” legislation, court cases, or elections 23. Federal regulation of lobbying and contributions to campaigns are enforced by the Federal Election Commission.
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Vocabulary (Key Terms) - Tier 2 and 3

Tier 2- Advocate, Analyze, Assess, Bias, Challenge, Coalition, Compete, Consequence, Constituent, Credibility, Diverse, Engage, Evaluate, Evidence, Influence, Mobilize, Motivate, Participate, Perspective, Predict, Preference, Promote, Represent, Significant, Strategy, Target, Trend

Tier 3- Absentee Voting, Agenda Setting, Amicus Curiae, Campaign Finance, Candidate-Centered Campaign, Caucus, Closed Primary, Coalition, Congressional Election, Direct Lobbying, Electoral College, Electoral Vote, Electioneering, Exit Poll, Free Rider, Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV), Grassroots Lobbying, Horse-Race Journalism, Independent Candidate, Interest Group, Iron Triangle, Issue Network, Linkage Institution, Lobbying, Majority Party, Midterm Election, Open Primary, Party Identification, Party Platform, Political Action Committee (PAC), Political Efficacy, Political Participation, Political Party, Presidential Election, Primary Election, Proportional Representation, Prospective Voting, Rational-Choice Voting, Realignment, Retrospective Voting, Selective Benefits, Single-Issue Group, Soft Money, Split-Ticket Voting, Straight-Ticket Voting, Super PAC, Third Party, Two-Party System, Voter Registration, Voter Turnout, Winner-Take-All

Unit Learning Targets/Goals/Outcomes:

Learning Target	NJSLS -Social Studies	NJSLS-ELA
- Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation. - Describe different models of voting behavior. - Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections. - Describe linkage institutions. - Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and	6.1.12.CivicsPI.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsCM.14.a 6.1.12.HistoryUP.2.c 6.1.12.CivicsDP.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsPD.14.a 6.1.12.CivicsPI.2.b	- L.SS.11–12.1.a - L.KL.11–12.2.a - L.KL.11–12.2.b - L.KL.11–12.2.c - L.VL.11–12.3.a - L.VL.11–12.3.d

government. 6. Explain why and how political parties change and adapt. 7. Explain how structural barriers affect third-party and independent candidate success. 8. Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest-group influence on elections and policymaking. 9. Explain how variation in types of interest groups and the resources interest groups possess affects their ability to influence elections and policymaking. 10. Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes. 11. Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election. 12. Explain how the Electoral College affects U.S. presidential elections. 13. Explain how the different processes work in U.S. congressional elections. 14. Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process. 15. Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process. 16. Explain the media's role as a linkage institution. 17. Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.	7. 6.1.12.HistoryCA.7.a 8. 6.1.12.HistoryCA.14.a 9. 6.1.12.CivicsPD.16.a	7. L.VI.11–12.4.b 8. RI.CR.11–12.1. 9. RI.CI.11–12.2. 10. RI.TS.11–12.4. 11. RI.MF.11–12.6. 12. RI.AA.11–12.7. 13. RI.CT.11–12.8. 14. W.AW.11–12.1.a 15. W.AW.11–12.1.b 16. SL.PE.11–12.1.a 17. SL.PI.11–12.4 18. SL.AS.11–12.6.
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Unit Resources:		
Lesson Resources	Text Resources	Technology & Online Resources
• Political Parties Presentation • The Party of You • Pew Research Center Stats and Questions • The Campaign Process Presentation • Civic Knowledge & Action in AP U.S. Government & Politics Lesson- College Board • Citizens United Unmarked Opinion Activity • McCutcheon v. Federal Elections Commission Activity • Elections and Voting Presentation • How Groups Voted 2024 Acitvty • Interest Groups Presentation	Secondary: • Textbook: American Government, Roots and Reform: 2020 Presidential Election Edition, AP Edition. O'Connor, Sabato. Pearson. 2022 Boston, Massachusetts. • AP Government and Politics: Premium, 2025, Barron's • Crash Course: AP U.S. Government and Politics. Fenton, Nancy; Olson-Goldman. Educational Research Association. 2020 Canbury, New Jersey. Primary • U.S. Constitution	• https://myap.collegeboard.org/ • https://streetlaw.org/ • https://constitutioncenter.org/education

• The News Media Presentation • Reliability of the News Activity • Fake News Activity	• Federalist No. 10 • “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” • Baker v. Carr (1962) • New York Times Co. v. United States (1971) • Shaw v. Reno (1993) • Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010)	
List of Accommodations and Modifications • Special Education • 504 Students • At Risk Students • ELL • Gifted and Talented		

Assessments:	
Formative	Summative
Homework: Notes sections of the textbook, online lectures and completion of essential questions, key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding, creating) Quizzes: Key terms and concepts from each chapter (remembering, understanding) Writing Assignments: FRQ’s from this unit, create your own amendment, response to Founding Documents (remembering, understanding, applying, evaluating) Participation: in discussions, debates, and simulations (understanding, analyzing, evaluating) Role Playing: Congress under the Articles of Confederation (understanding, applying, analyzing, creating) Posters: Amendments (understanding, creating) Power Points, Google Slides: Project presentations (applying, evaluating, creating) Panel Discussions: What does it mean to be a good citizen? (applying, evaluation)	Chapter quizzes (remembering, understanding) Unit tests (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit FRQs (remembering, applying, analyzing) Unit projects (applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) Evaluation of interactive discussion and debate (analyzing, evaluating)

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts

- FRQ writing, reading required primary source documents , reading the Constitution of the United States

Mathematics

- Analysis of charts and graphs related to government policy issues.

Science

- Assessing the government's role in regulating scientific research

Art

- Interpreting political cartoons and government programs aimed at fostering the arts

Technology and 21st Century Themes & Skills

- Utilizing the AP US Government and Politics partnership with The Constitution Center in Philadelphia and the internet sources provide, Google Classroom, Government Websites, etc.

Computer Science

- Utilizing the AP US Government and Politics partnership with The Constitution Center in Philadelphia and the internet sources provide, Google Classroom, Government Websites, etc.

History

- Tracing historical developments and the impact of those changes on the American form of government.

State Mandates and Resources

- [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#)
- [Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills](#)
- [Amistad Law](#)
- [NJ Amistad Commission Interactive Curriculum](#)
- [Holocaust Law](#)
- [NJ Commission on Holocaust Education Curriculum Guide and Materials](#)
- [LGBT and Disabilities Law](#)
- [Career Ready Practices \(BHPRSD\)](#)
- [Asian and Pacific Islander](#)
- [Climate Change](#)