

Priority Standards for U.S. Government Grade 12

Priority Standard 1: SS24.USG.1 – Enlightenment Foundations of Government

Students will be able to explain how Enlightenment principles influenced the structure, founding documents, and institutions of the United States government.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can synthesize ideas from multiple Enlightenment thinkers (Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire) to construct a nuanced explanation of how their philosophies directly and indirectly shaped specific elements of the Constitution, including evaluating tensions between ideas (e.g., security vs. liberty) and applying them to modern government issues.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can explain how key Enlightenment ideas (natural rights, social contract, separation of powers) influenced the structure and principles of U.S. government and founding documents.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify major Enlightenment thinkers and describe some of their ideas, but may struggle to clearly connect those ideas to U.S. government structures or documents.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can recognize a few names or terms (e.g., Locke, natural rights) with support but demonstrates limited understanding of their meaning or significance.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

Priority Standard 2: SS24.USG.2 – Foundations from Revolution to Constitution

Students will be able to describe how revolutionary events and early documents influenced the Constitution and Bill of Rights.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can evaluate how specific revolutionary experiences and debates (e.g., weaknesses of Articles, Federalist vs. Anti-Federalist arguments) shaped constitutional compromises and protections, and assess their long-term impact on American governance.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can describe how the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and American Revolution influenced the drafting and ratification of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify major documents or events but may only partially explain how they influenced the Constitution or may confuse relationships.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can identify basic terms (e.g., Constitution, Revolution) with assistance but shows minimal understanding of connections.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

Priority Standard 3: SS24.USG.3 – Structure and Principles of the Constitution

Students will be able to analyze the structure, principles, and amendment process of the Constitution and its impact on rights.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can analyze how constitutional principles interact (e.g., federalism vs. popular sovereignty), evaluate the effectiveness of the amendment process, and assess how the 14th Amendment has expanded rights through landmark cases.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can explain key constitutional principles, describe the amendment process, and explain how the 14th Amendment expanded rights.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify some principles or steps in the amendment process but may struggle to fully explain them or connect them to real-world examples.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can recognize basic terms (e.g., Constitution, rights) but shows limited understanding even with support.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

Priority Standard 4: SS24.USG.4 – Legislative Branch

Students will be able to describe the structure, roles, and lawmaking process of Congress.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can evaluate how congressional structures and processes (committees, leadership, lobbying) influence policy outcomes and assess the effectiveness of Congress in balancing competing interests.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can describe the roles of Congress, leadership positions, committee functions, and explain the process of how a bill becomes a law.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify parts of Congress or steps in the lawmaking process but may have gaps or confusion in sequencing or purpose.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can recognize basic terms (e.g., Congress, law) with assistance but shows minimal understanding of structure or process.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

Priority Standard 5: SS24.USG.5 – Executive Branch

Students will be able to analyze the powers, roles, and structures of the executive branch.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can evaluate how presidential power has evolved over time, analyze the balance between formal and informal powers, and assess the role of bureaucracy in policy implementation.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can describe formal and informal presidential powers, explain the role of the Cabinet and bureaucracy, and analyze executive responsibilities.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify some presidential powers or roles but may struggle to distinguish between types or explain their impact.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can recognize basic terms (e.g., president, executive) with support but demonstrates limited understanding.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

Priority Standard 6: SS24.USG.6 – Judicial Branch

Students will be able to summarize the structure and function of the judicial branch and its role in interpreting the Constitution.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can analyze how judicial philosophy (strict vs. loose construction) influences rulings and evaluate the long-term impact of landmark Supreme Court cases on civil liberties and rights.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can explain judicial review, court structure, appointment process, and describe the impact of landmark cases.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify parts of the court system or recognize cases but may struggle to explain their significance or processes.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can recognize basic terms (e.g., court, judge) with assistance but shows minimal understanding.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

Priority Standard 7: SS24.USG.7 – Suffrage and Political Participation

Students will be able to analyze how the expansion of suffrage has impacted the political system.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can evaluate how shifts in suffrage and voting rights have reshaped political coalitions and policy outcomes, and assess modern barriers to voting with proposed solutions.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can explain how suffrage expanded and how it impacted political participation and voter behavior.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify key amendments or events related to voting rights but may struggle to explain their broader impact.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can recognize basic terms (e.g., voting, rights) with support but shows limited understanding.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

Priority Standard 8: SS24.USG.11 – Electoral Process

Students will be able to analyze the electoral process and its effects on representation and participation.

- **4.0 (Exemplary):** Student can evaluate the effectiveness of electoral systems (e.g., Electoral College, redistricting) and propose informed arguments about reforms and their potential consequences.
- **3.0 (Proficient):** Student can explain how the electoral process works, including the Electoral College, and analyze its effects on voter participation and representation.
- **2.0 (Developing):** Student can identify parts of the electoral system but may struggle to explain how they influence outcomes.
- **1.0 (Beginning):** Student can recognize basic terms (e.g., election, voting) with assistance but shows minimal understanding.
- **0.0 (No Evidence):** No observable evidence of understanding.

9-Week Pacing Guide -- U.S. Government Grade 12

Week	Unit	Priority Standard	Supporting Standards	Instructional Focus
Wk 1	Unit 1	1. SS24.USG.1 – Enlightenment Foundations	1.1 Enlightenment ideas (Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire) 1.2 Influence on founding documents 1.3 Comparison of philosophies	Analyze Enlightenment ideas and connect them to U.S. government principles; introduce natural rights, social contract, separation of powers
Wk 2	Unit 2	2. SS24.USG.2 – Revolution to Constitution	2.1 Declaration principles 2.2 Articles strengths/weaknesses 2.3 Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists	Trace development from Revolution to Constitution; analyze debates and compromises; evaluate need for Bill of Rights
Wk 3	Unit 3	3. SS24.USG.3 – Constitution & Principles	3.1 Constitutional principles 3.2 Amendment process 3.3 14th Amendment & rights expansion	Deep dive into Constitution; analyze federalism, checks and balances; connect amendments to modern rights
Wk 4	Unit 4	4. SS24.USG.4 – Legislative Branch	4.1 Congressional leadership 4.2 Committees 4.3 Lawmaking process	Understand structure of Congress; simulate lawmaking; analyze influence of committees and political negotiation
Wk 5	Unit 5	5. SS24.USG.5 – Executive Branch (Powers)	5.1 Formal vs. informal powers 5.2 Cabinet roles 5.3 Bureaucracy structure	Analyze presidential power; evaluate leadership roles; explore executive influence on policy and public opinion
Wk 6	Unit 5 (cont.)	5. SS24.USG.5 – Executive Branch (Application)	5.1–5.3 Spiral & Application	Examine case studies of presidential actions; connect bureaucracy to real-world policy implementation
Wk 7	Unit 6	6. SS24.USG.6 – Judicial Branch (Structure)	6.1 Court system structure 6.2 Judicial appointments 6.3 Judicial interpretation	Analyze court structure and processes; compare strict vs. loose interpretation; understand judicial review
Wk 8	Unit 6 (cont.)	6. SS24.USG.6 – Judicial Branch (Impact)	6.3 Spiral 6.4 Landmark cases (U.S.) 6.5 Alabama cases	Evaluate impact of Supreme Court decisions; connect cases to civil rights and liberties; apply to modern issues
Wk 9	Unit 7	7. SS24.USG.7 – Suffrage 8.	7.1 Expansion of voting rights 7.2 Voter participation 7.3 Voting	Analyze voting rights and participation; evaluate

Week	Unit	Priority Standard	Supporting Standards	Instructional Focus
		SS24.USG.11 – Elections	barriers 8.1 Electoral College 8.2 Redistricting 8.3 Election systems	election systems; connect civic engagement to democratic outcomes

Instructional Summary

- **Weeks 1–3:** Foundations & Constitution
- **Weeks 4–8:** Branches of Government (deep dive)
- **Week 9:** Political participation & elections