



AP Government Summer Assignment 2009

The key to success in AP United States Government is like a three legged stool. One of the legs is having a strong foundation in government-related current events. If you cannot relate the curriculum concepts we will discuss in class to anything in “real life,” then what is the point? Look at the topics below that we will consider.

1st Quarter

- Unit 1 – The Challenge of Good Government (Ch. 1,2)
- Unit 2 – Political Culture (Ch. 4)
- Unit 3 – Political Ideology (Ch. 9)
- Unit 4 – Media and Public Opinion (Ch. 7,12)
- Unit 5 – Political Participation and the Two-Party System (Ch. 8,9)
- Unit 6 – Elections and Special Interests (Ch. 10,11)
- Unit 7 – Federal Bureaucracy (Ch. 15)
- Unit 8 – The Federal Budget: An Overview (Ch. 17,19)

2nd Quarter

- Unit 9 – Health Care (Ch. 19)
- Unit 10 – Social Security (Ch. 19)
- Unit 11 – Education (No text reference)
- Unit 12 – The Environment (Ch. 21)
- Unit 13 – Foreign Policy (Ch. 20)
- Unit 14 – Economic Policy (Ch. 18)
- Unit 15 – Federalism (Ch. 3)
- Unit 16 – Congress (Ch. 13)
- Unit 17 – How Congress Works (Ch. 13)

3rd Quarter

Unit 18 – The Presidency (Ch. 14)

Unit 19 – The Executive Branch (Ch. 14)

Unit 20 – The Federal Court System (Ch. 16)

Unit 21 – The Supreme Court (Ch. 16)

Unit 22 – Civil Liberties and Civil Rights (Ch. 5)

Unit 23 – Students and the Bill of Rights (Ch. 5)

Unit 24 – A Retrospective Look at the Constitution (*The Words We Live By*)

I would like you to read the news every day. Try to pick at least three reputable sources of news, whether it be newspapers or magazines. Online news sites are fine, in fact preferable, but I will not count blogs. Collect news items that enlighten you about as many of the unit topics in our curriculum as you can. Follow this simple format:

News item

Summarize the story in a decent paragraph or two, but don't make it too long. These items can also be editorials, as long as you distinguish between facts and opinion.

What this teaches me about our government

Think of this course as a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle about how our government works. You are not exactly at the beginning, because you already know some things. Each concept with which you become comfortable is like fitting together a few more pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. In time, a coherent picture begins to take shape. In this paragraph you will try to connect the pieces. By the way, the jigsaw analogy doesn't totally work, since nobody completes the puzzle (or totally understands how our government works).

I want you to email me and share your progress on this assignment on or around July 1 and August 1. Send it to my school email address on the class expectation sheet. You will bring or send me your completed folder sometime during the week before school starts in September.

I am not giving you a set number of news items or unit topics to “cover.” Please do not go for quantity at the expense of quality. The goal is for greater understanding.

This will be a worthwhile task if you can better understand and are more at ease in talking about how our government works. It will also be worthwhile if you find that following the news daily no longer is a “task.”

Have an enjoyable and educational summer, and feel free to contact me anytime with questions or comments.

D. Meyerholz

