

Course at a Glance

Plan

The Course at a Glance provides a useful visual organization of the AP U.S. Government and Politics curricular components, including:

- Sequence of units, along with approximate weighting and suggested pacing. Please note, pacing options are provided for teaching the course for a full year and for a single semester.
- Progression of topics within each unit.
- Spiraling of the skills across all units.

Teach

COURSE SKILLS

Course skills spiral across units.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Concept Application | 3 Data Analysis |
| 2 SCOTUS Application | 4 Source Analysis |
| | 5 Argumentation |

Assess

Assign the Progress Checks—either as homework or in class—for each unit. Each Progress Check contains formative multiple-choice and free-response questions. The feedback from the Progress Checks shows students the areas where they need to focus.

UNIT
1

Foundations of American Democracy

~16/~8 Class Periods
15–22% AP Exam Weighting

1	1.1 Ideals of Democracy
4	1.2 Types of Democracy
1	1.3 Government Power and Individual Rights
4	1.4 Challenges of the Articles of Confederation
1	1.5 Ratification of the U.S. Constitution
4	1.6 Principles of American Government
5	1.7 Relationship between the States and National Government
2	1.8 Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism
5	1.9 Federalism in Action

Progress Check 1

- Multiple-choice: ~20 questions**
Free-response: 3 questions
- Concept Application
 - Argument Essay (partial)
 - Argument Essay (partial)

UNIT
2

Interactions Among Branches of Government

~28/~14 Class Periods
25–36% AP Exam Weighting

1	2.1 Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives
3	2.2 Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress
2	2.3 Congressional Behavior
3	2.4 Roles and Powers of the President
1	2.5 Checks on the Presidency
4	2.6 Expansion of Presidential Power
1	2.7 Presidential Communication
2	2.8 The Judicial Branch
1	2.9 The Role of the Judicial Branch
2	2.10 The Court in Action
1	2.11 Checks on the Judicial Branch
4	2.12 The Bureaucracy
1	2.13 Discretionary and Rulemaking Authority
3	2.14 Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable
3	2.15 Policy and the Branches of Government

Progress Check 2

- Multiple-choice: ~45 questions**
Free-response: 3 questions
- Concept Application
 - Quantitative Analysis
 - SCOTUS Comparison

NOTE: Partial versions of the free-response questions are provided to prepare students for more complex, full questions that they will encounter on the AP Exam.

**UNIT
3**

**Civil Liberties
and Civil Rights**

~26/~13 Class Periods **13–18%** AP Exam Weighting

- 1** 3.1 The Bill of Rights
- 2** 3.2 First Amendment: Freedom of Religion
- 5** 3.3 First Amendment: Freedom of Speech
- 4** 3.4 First Amendment: Freedom of the Press
- 4** 3.5 Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms
- 5** 3.6 Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety
- 2** 3.7 Selective Incorporation
- 5** 3.8 Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused
- 1** 3.9 Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy
- 4** 3.10 Social Movements and Equal Protection
- 2** 3.11 Government Responses to Social Movements
- 2** 3.12 Balancing Minority and Majority Rights
- 1** 3.13 Affirmative Action

Progress Check 3

- Multiple-choice: ~30 questions**
Free-response: 3 questions
- SCOTUS Comparison
 - Argument Essay (partial)
 - Argument Essay (partial)

**UNIT
4**

**American
Political
Ideologies and
Beliefs**

~22/~11 Class Periods **10–15%** AP Exam Weighting

- 1** 4.1 American Attitudes About Government and Politics
- 3** 4.2 Political Socialization
- 3** 4.3 Changes in Ideology
- 4** 4.4 Influence of Political Events on Ideology
- 3** 4.5 Measuring Public Opinion
- 3** 4.6 Evaluating Public Opinion Data
- 1** 4.7 Ideologies of Political Parties
- 4** 4.8 Ideology and Policymaking
- 3** 4.9 Ideology and Economic Policy
- 4** 4.10 Ideology and Social Policy

Progress Check 4

- Multiple-choice: ~30 questions**
Free-response: 3 questions
- Concept Application
 - Quantitative Analysis
 - Quantitative Analysis

**UNIT
5**

**Political
Participation**

~18/~9 Class Periods **20–27%** AP Exam Weighting

- 1** 5.1 Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior
- 3** 5.2 Voter Turnout
- 1** 5.3 Political Parties
- 4** 5.4 How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt
- 3** 5.5 Third-Party Politics
- 3** 5.6 Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking
- 1** 5.7 Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes
- 5** 5.8 Electing a President
- 5** 5.9 Congressional Elections
- 5** 5.10 Modern Campaigns
- 2** 5.11 Campaign Finance
- 5** 5.12 The Media
- 2** 5.13 Changing Media

Progress Check 5

- Multiple-choice: ~30 questions**
Free-response: 3 questions
- Quantitative Analysis
 - Argument Essay
 - Argument Essay

AP U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Unit Guides

Introduction

Designed with extensive input from the community of AP U.S. Government and Politics educators, the unit guides offer all teachers helpful guidance in building students' skills and knowledge. The suggested sequence was identified through a thorough analysis of the syllabi of highly effective AP teachers and the organization of typical college textbooks.

This unit structure respects new AP teachers' time by providing one possible sequence they can adopt or modify rather than having to build from scratch. An additional benefit is that these units enable the AP Program to provide interested teachers with formative assessments—the Progress Checks—that they can assign their students at the end of each unit to gauge progress toward success on the AP Exam. However, experienced AP teachers who are satisfied with their current course organization and exam results should feel no pressure to adopt these units, which comprise an optional sequence for this course.

Using the Unit Guides

UNIT 1 **15–22%** AP EXAM WEIGHTING **~16–/8** CLASS PERIODS

Foundations of American Democracy

BIG IDEA 1
Constitutionalism
Why are there debates about the balance of power between the federal and state governments?

BIG IDEA 2
Liberty and Order
Is the Bill of Rights necessary? Why or why not?

BIG IDEA 4
Competing Policymaking Interests
How does the Constitution affect you and the choices you make?

Developing Understanding

More than 200 years after the U.S. Constitution was ratified, the compromises that were necessary for ratification—which in some instances led to ambiguity—continue to fuel debate and discussion over how best to protect liberty, equality, order, and private property. This first unit sets the foundation for the course by examining how the framers of the Constitution set up a structure of government intended to stand the test of time. Compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises focused on the proper balance between individual freedom, social order, and equality of opportunity. In subsequent units, students will apply their understanding of the Constitution to the institutions of government and people's daily lives.

Building the Course Skills

In the study of government and political science, text-based qualitative sources help political scientists understand how governmental and political institutions and actors function and the reasons for their behaviors. These sources are often actually arguments about what the government does (or should do) and how these actions impact citizens and other people in the country.

In this course, students also learn to write their own arguments. Their arguments should establish a line of reasoning that will serve as the organizing principle for the essay and that will support the essay's purpose (e.g., to explain similarities and differences among political principles or to explain political processes).

In their arguments, students should write claims that take a position, going beyond simply stating facts. Claims should also include additional information that sets up the evidence. This is usually developed through a "because" statement, as in "My claim is the strongest because . . .", which is then followed by specific relevant evidence. Evidence is relevant when it relates to and supports the claim.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course requires students to apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts and to real-world scenarios. It's not enough for students to know the definition of governmental terms and concepts. On the AP Exam, they will be asked to show a deeper understanding of how these concepts actually work, often by describing and explaining an interaction or application within a given scenario on both multiple-choice and free-response questions. Students often struggle with explanations. They may define or describe a concept but not fully explain the how or why in the context of the question. Have students practice by asking them to explain the steps, stages, and interactions of processes; explain and link causes and effects; or explain the significance of similarities and differences.

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UNIT OPENERS

Developing Understanding provides an overview that contextualizes and situates the key content of the unit within the scope of the course.

Big ideas are cross-cutting concepts that build conceptual understanding across units. The **essential questions** are thought-provoking questions that motivate students and inspire inquiry.

Building the Course Skills describes specific aspects of the practices that are appropriate to focus on in that unit.

Preparing for the AP Exam provides helpful tips and common student misunderstandings identified from prior exam data.

UNIT 1 **Foundations of American Democracy**

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
1.1 Ideals of Democracy	1.C Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
1.2 Types of Democracy	1.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
1.3 Government Power and Individual Rights	1.C Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.4 Challenges of the Articles of Confederation	1.A Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.5 Ratification of the U.S. Constitution	1.C Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
1.6 Principles of American Government	1.A Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.7 Relationship Between the States and National Government	1.C Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
1.8 Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism	1.C Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
1.9 Federalism in Action	1.C Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.

Go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 1. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

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The **Unit at a Glance table** shows the topics and suggested skills.

The **suggested skill** for each topic shows one way teachers can link the content in that topic to a specific AP U.S. Government and Politics skill. The individual skill has been thoughtfully chosen in a way that allows teachers to spiral those skills throughout the course. The questions on the Progress Checks are based on this pairing. However, AP Exam questions can pair the content with any of the skills.

Using the Unit Guides

Foundations of American Democracy UNIT 1

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	1.2 and 1.3	Close Reading When students are reading the required foundational documents, such as Federalist No. 10 and Brutus No. 1, have them highlight relevant words and passages that support the authors' claims. Ask students to connect ideas outlined in the documents to the Federalist and Antifederalist views of how our government was founded.
2	1.3 and 1.6	Think-Pair-Share Give students a question that requires them to connect Madison's argument in Federalist No. 51 to a) the structure of the three branches of government established in the Constitution and b) his argument about factions in Federalist No. 10.
3	1.8	Case Notes Have students create case notes for <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> and <i>United States v. Lopez</i> that include the following information: facts of the case, majority opinion, and the reasoning (constitutional questions) for the majority opinion. Make sure students focus on the constitutional reasoning behind the Court's decision.
4	1.9	Making Connections Write concepts related to one of the course big ideas on index cards, place them in a box, and have students pick a card at random. Give students a few minutes to gather and recall information about the term, and then pair students and ask them to find the connection between their concepts. Finally, ask the pairs to write a brief explanation of how the concepts are related.

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The **Sample Instructional Activities** page includes optional activities that can help tie together the content and skills of a particular topic.

Foundations of American Democracy UNIT 1

TOPIC 1.7 Relationship Between the States and National Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE	ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
LO 1.7.A Explain how the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments affects society.	EK 1.7.A.1 Federalism is the system of government in the United States in which power is shared between the national and state governments. The exclusive and concurrent powers of the national and state governments help explain the ongoing debate over the balance of power between the two levels. EK 1.7.A.2 Exclusive power is held by only one level of government and includes enumerated powers that are written in the Constitution, and implied powers that are not specifically written in the Constitution but are inferred from the Necessary and Proper Clause. EK 1.7.A.3 Reserved powers are those not delegated or enumerated to the national government but are reserved to the states, as stated in the Tenth Amendment. EK 1.7.A.4 Concurrent powers are shared between both levels of government such as the power to collect taxes, the power to make and enforce laws and the power to build roads. EK 1.7.A.5 The distribution of power between national and state governments is demonstrated by: i. Revenue sharing (national funding with almost no restrictions to the states on its use and is the least used form of funding)

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SUGGESTED SKILL

1.A Argumentation
Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- National Recovery Act of 1933
- Devolution revolution of the 1980s
- Federal response to natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and Sandy
- National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984
- State-level legalization of marijuana for personal use as in Colorado and Washington (2012)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment

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TOPIC PAGES

The **suggested skill** offers a possible skill to pair with the topic.

Optional readings and illustrative examples: Where relevant, a list of optional readings and illustrative examples are provided as additional resources, should teachers choose to use them. The list includes common historical documents and secondary sources from a variety of political perspectives.

Learning objectives define what a student should know and be able to do.

Essential knowledge statements describe the knowledge required to perform the learning objective.

Where possible, **available resources** are listed that might help teachers address a particular topic in their classroom.

Required Foundational Documents

Foundational documents are necessary for students to understand the philosophical underpinnings and political values of the U.S. political system and may serve as the focus of AP Exam questions. Source analysis of these documents helps students gain an understanding of how philosophical discussions and debates shaped the architecture of the government. Teachers are encouraged to also use both classic and contemporary scholarly writings in political science to promote the comparison of political ideas and their application to recent events.

The following is a list of required Foundational Documents.



Required Foundational Documents

- **THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION**
- **BRUTUS NO.1**
To the Citizens of the State of New-York
- **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES (INCLUDING THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS)**
- **THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**
- **FEDERALIST NO. 10**
The Same Subject Continued: The Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection
- **FEDERALIST NO. 51**
The Structure of the Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances Between the Different Departments
- **FEDERALIST NO. 70**
The Executive Department Further Considered
- **FEDERALIST NO. 78**
The Judiciary Department
- **“LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL” (BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.)**

Foundational documents are named in specific topics within the Course Framework; however, the concepts within these documents are also present in other topics and units. The table below indicates both where the foundational document is named in the Course Framework (bold Learning Objectives), and where the documents are also relevant to other Learning Objectives.

Please note: While the Constitution is a required foundational document, it is not listed explicitly below because it is applicable to nearly all course learning objectives.

continued on next page

Foundational Document	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
The Articles of Confederation	1.3.A 1.4.A 1.5.A 1.7.A		3.7.A		
Brutus No. 1	1.2.A 1.3.A				
The Declaration of Independence	1.1.A 1.2.A 1.3.A				
Federalist No. 10	1.2.A 1.3.A 1.4.A 1.9.A	2.1.A 2.2.A 2.3.A 2.4.A 2.5.A 2.6.A		4.7.A 4.8.A 4.9.A 4.10.A	5.3.A 5.4.A 5.5.A 5.6.A 5.7.A 5.10.A 5.11.A
Federalist No. 51	1.4.A 1.5.A 1.6.A 1.6.B 1.9.A	2.2.A 2.3.A 2.4.A 2.5.A 2.6.A 2.8.A 2.10.A 2.11.B 2.14.A 2.15.A			
Federalist No. 70	1.6.A	2.4.A 2.5.A 2.6.A 2.7.A 2.8.A 2.12.A 2.13.A 2.14.A 2.15.A			
Federalist No. 78		2.8.A 2.9.A 2.10.A 2.11.A 2.11.B			
Letter from a Birmingham Jail			3.1.A 3.1.B 3.3.A 3.4.A 3.6.A 3.7.A 3.8.A 3.10.A 3.11.A 3.12.A		5.7.A

Information about many constitutional issues can be found on the National Constitution Center’s website. This same information is also available for download for e-readers, tablets, and other mobile devices through the National Constitution Center’s Interactive Constitution App.

Required Supreme Court Cases

Required cases decided by the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) provide instructional opportunities to study each case in-depth and to make connections between course concepts. AP Exam questions will ask students to describe important details from these cases, explain how those details relate to concepts in the course, and compare required cases with other Supreme Court cases. Any non-required Supreme Court case that appears on AP Exams will be accompanied by a summary containing all information necessary to compare the non-required case to required SCOTUS cases.

The required Supreme Court cases are widely considered essential content in college courses. Some of the cases may be seen as controversial and some were decided by thin majorities (5 to 4 decisions). Students are not expected or required to either agree or disagree with the Court's decision. While students will not need to know any dissenting (or concurring) opinions from required cases, teachers should encourage students to be familiar with the legal arguments on both sides of leading important constitutional cases and thoughtfully analyze the majority and dissenting opinions.

Students should learn the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases. The table below provides a brief definition for these terms.

Term	Definition
SCOTUS	Supreme Court of the United States
Facts	The relevant events of a case that occurred before courts became involved
Issue	A legal or Constitutional question the court considers in a case
Holding	The court's response to the issue being considered in a case
Reasoning	The court's explanation of a holding
Decision	The outcome of a case that includes a discussion of the facts, issue, holding, and reasoning
Opinion	An analysis of the court's decision, written by the justices. The majority opinion is agreed upon by more than half of the justices

The following is a list of required Supreme Court cases and a brief description of their holdings.



Required Supreme Court Cases

- **MARBURY V. MADISON (1803)**
In deciding this case about judicial appointments, the court established the principle of judicial review, empowering the Supreme Court to declare an act of the legislative or executive branch unconstitutional.
- **MCCULLOCH V. MARYLAND (1819)**
In deciding this case about a national bank and state taxes, the court established supremacy of the U.S. Constitution and federal laws over state laws.
- **SCHENCK V. UNITED STATES (1919)**
Speech creating a “clear and present danger” was not protected by the First Amendment and could be limited.
- **BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION (1954)**
Race-based school segregation violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- **BAKER V. CARR (1962)**
This case held that redistricting did not raise political questions, allowing federal courts to hear other cases that challenge redistricting plans that may violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- **ENGEL V. VITALE (1962)**
School sponsorship of religious activities violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.
- **GIDEON V. WAINWRIGHT (1963)**
In this case, the Sixth Amendment’s right to an attorney extends procedural due process protections to felony defendants in state courts.
- **TINKER V. DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (1969)**
A prohibition against public school students wearing black armbands in school to protest the Vietnam War violated the students’ freedom of speech protections in the First Amendment.
- **NEW YORK TIMES CO. V. UNITED STATES (1971)**
This case bolstered the freedom of the press protections of the First Amendment, establishing a “heavy presumption against prior restraint” even in cases involving national security.
- **WISCONSIN V. YODER (1972)**
Compelling Amish students to attend school past the eighth grade violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment.
- **SHAW V. RENO (1993)**
Under the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause, majority-minority districts, created under the Voting Rights Act of 1965, may be constitutionally challenged by voters if race is the only factor used in creating the district.
- **UNITED STATES V. LOPEZ (1995)**
Congress exceeded its power under the Commerce Clause when it made possession of a gun in a school zone a federal crime.
- **MCDONALD V. CHICAGO (2010)**
The Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms for self-defense is applicable to the states.
- **CITIZENS UNITED V. FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (2010)**
Political spending by corporations, associations, and labor unions is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment.

Students should also learn how these Supreme Court decisions relate to course content. The SCOTUS Cross-Reference table suggests how the study of Supreme Court cases can provide an opportunity to show relationships between various course concepts. Teachers and students may choose more than one place within the course to study required Supreme Court cases.

Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
<i>Marbury v Madison (1803)</i>	1.1.A				
	1.6.A				
	1.6.B				
		2.8.A			
		2.11.A			
		2.11.B			
		2.15.B			
				4.1.A	
<i>McCulloch v Maryland (1819)</i>	1.1.A				
	1.3.A				
	1.4.A				
	1.5.A				
	1.7.A				
	1.8.A				
		2.1.A			
		2.11.A			
<i>Schenck v United States (1919)</i>	1.1.A				
	1.5.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.1.B		
			3.3.A		
			3.12.A		
				4.8.A	
				4.10.A	
<i>Brown v Board of Education (1964)</i>		2.11.A			
		2.11.B			
			3.9.A		
			3.10.A		
			3.11.A		
			3.12.A		
				4.3.A	
				4.10.A	

Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
<i>Baker v Carrb (1961)</i>	1.2.A				
	1.6.B				
	1.7.A				
		2.1.A			
		2.3.A			
		2.10.A			
					5.1.A
					5.2.A
<i>Engel v Vitale (1962)</i>	1.1.A				
	1.6.A				
	1.8.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.2.A		
			3.7.A		
			3.10.A		
				4.10.A	
<i>Gideon v Wainwright (1963)</i>	1.1.A				
	1.6.A				
	1..8.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.7.A		
			3.8.A		
			3.8.A		
<i>Tinker v Des Moines Independent Community School District (1969)</i>	1.1.A				
	1.2.A				
	1.3.A				
	1.5.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.3.A		
			3.6.A		
				4.8.A	
<i>New York Times Company v US (1971)</i>	1.1.A				
		2.6.A			
		2.8.A			
		2.9.A			

Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
		2.11.A			
			3.1.A		
			3.4.A		
					5.12.A
<i>Wisconsin v Yoder (1972)</i>	1.3.A				
	1.6.A				
	1.8.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.2.A		
			3.7.A		
			3.10.A		
				4.10.A	
<i>Shaw v Reno (1993)</i>	1.2.A				
	1.7.A				
	1.9.A				
		2.2.A			
		2.3.A			
					5.1.A
					5.2.A
					5.9.A
<i>United States v Lopez (1995)</i>	1.5.A				
	1.7.A				
	1.8.A				
	1.9.A				
		2.10.A			
			3.1.A		
			3.5.A		
			3.6.A		
<i>McDonald v Chicago (2010)</i>	1.4.A				
			3.1.A		
			3.5.A		
			3.6.A		
			3.7.A		
				4.7.A	

Case	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5
					5.6.A
					5.7.A
<i>Citizens United v Federal Election Commission (FEC) (2010)</i>	1.2.A				
		2.13.A			
			3.1.A		
			3.3.A		
					5.6.A
					5.7.A
					5.10.A
					5.11.A

**AP U.S. GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS**

UNIT 1

**Foundations
of American
Democracy**



15–22%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING



~16/~8
CLASS PERIODS

The icon consists of the letters 'AP' in a bold, blue font, centered within a white square. This square is itself centered within a larger white circle. The circle has a thin blue border and a subtle drop shadow, giving it a three-dimensional appearance. The entire icon is positioned at the top center of a light blue rectangular box that contains the rest of the text.

Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 1

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

Free-response: 3 questions

- Concept Application
- Argument Essay (partial)
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Foundations of American Democracy



Developing Understanding

BIG IDEA 1

Constitutionalism

- Why are there debates about the balance of power between the federal and state governments?

BIG IDEA 2

Liberty and Order

- Is the Bill of Rights necessary? Why or why not?

BIG IDEA 4

Competing Policymaking Interests

- How does the Constitution affect you and the choices you make?

More than 200 years after the U.S. Constitution was ratified, the compromises that were necessary for ratification—which in some instances led to ambiguity—continue to fuel debate and discussion over how best to protect liberty, equality, order, and private property. This first unit sets the foundation for the course by examining how the framers of the Constitution set up a structure of government intended to stand the test of time. Compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises focused on the proper balance between individual freedom, social order, and equality of opportunity. In subsequent units, students will apply their understanding of the Constitution to the institutions of government and people’s daily lives.

Building the Course Skills

4.A 4.B 5.A 5.B

In the study of government and political science, text-based qualitative sources help political scientists understand how governmental and political institutions and actors function and the reasons for their behaviors. These sources are often actually arguments about what the government does (or should do) and how these actions impact citizens and other people in the country.

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claim is the strongest because . . .”, which is then followed by specific relevant evidence. Evidence is relevant when it relates to and supports the claim.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course requires students to apply their knowledge in a variety of contexts and to real-world scenarios. It’s not enough for students to know the definition of governmental terms and concepts. On the AP Exam, they will be asked to show a deeper understanding of how these concepts actually work, often by describing and explaining an interaction or application within a given scenario on both multiple-choice and free-response questions.

Students often struggle with explanations. They may define or describe a concept but not fully explain the how or why in the context of the question. Have students practice by asking them to explain the steps, stages, and interactions of processes; explain and link causes and effects; or explain the significance of similarities and differences.

UNIT
1

Foundations of American Democracy

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
1.1 Ideals of Democracy	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
1.2 Types of Democracy	4.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
1.3 Government Power and Individual Rights	1.A Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.4 Challenges of the Articles of Confederation	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.5 Ratification of the U.S. Constitution	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
1.6 Principles of American Government	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
1.7 Relationship Between the States and National Government	5.A Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
1.8 Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism	2.A Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
1.9 Federalism in Action	5.B Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.



Go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 1.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	1.2 and 1.3	<p>Close Reading</p> <p>When students are reading the required foundational documents, such as <i>Federalist No. 10</i> and <i>Brutus No. 1</i>, have them highlight relevant words and passages that support the authors' claims. Ask students to connect ideas outlined in the documents to the Federalist and Antifederalist views of how our government was founded.</p>
2	1.3 and 1.6	<p>Think-Pair-Share</p> <p>Give students a question that requires them to connect Madison's argument in <i>Federalist No. 51</i> to a) the structure of the three branches of government established in the Constitution and b) his argument about factions in <i>Federalist No. 10</i>.</p>
3	1.8	<p>Case Notes</p> <p>Have students create case notes for <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> and <i>United States v. Lopez</i> that include the following information: facts of the case, majority opinion, and the reasoning (constitutional question) for the majority opinion. Make sure students focus on the constitutional reasoning behind the Court's decision.</p>
4	1.9	<p>Making Connections</p> <p>Write concepts related to one of the course big ideas on index cards, place them in a box, and have students pick a card at random. Give students a few minutes to gather and recall information about the term, and then pair students and ask them to find the connection between their concepts. Finally, ask the pairs to write a brief explanation of how the concepts are related.</p>

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.



OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Thomas Hobbes's definition of an anarchic "state of nature" in the absence of government, as in the failed state of Somalia
- The Mayflower Compact (1620)
- John Locke's *Second Treatise of Civil Government* (1690)
- Baron de Montesquieu's ideas about separating powers in government found in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748)

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources > [Analytical Reading \(Declaration of Independence\)](#)

TOPIC 1.1

Ideals of Democracy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.1.A

Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.1.A.1

The U.S. government is based on the following democratic ideals:

- Natural rights (all people have certain rights that cannot be taken away)
- A social contract (an implicit agreement among the people in a society to give up some freedoms to maintain social order)
- Popular sovereignty (all government power comes from the consent of its people)
- Limited government (a government's power cannot be absolute)

EK 1.1.A.2

The ideal of limited government is ensured by the interaction of these principles:

- Separation of powers
- Checks and balances
- Federalism
- Republicanism


EK 1.1.A.3

The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson (with help from Adams and Franklin), restates the philosophy of natural rights, and provides a foundation for popular sovereignty. The U.S. Constitution, drafted by James Madison at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia that was led by George Washington (with important contributions from Hamilton and members of the "Grand Committee"), is an example of a social contract and establishes a system of limited government. The Constitution provides the blueprint for a unique form of democratic government in the United States.

TOPIC 1.2

Types of Democracy

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Source Analysis*

4.A

Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.2.A

Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, events, or debates in the U.S.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.2.A.1

Representative democracies can take several forms including the following models:

- i. Participatory democracy, which emphasizes broad participation in politics and civil society
- ii. Pluralist democracy, which emphasizes group-based activism by nongovernmental interests striving for impact on political decision making
- iii. Elite democracy, which emphasizes limited participation in politics and civil society

EK 1.2.A.2

Different aspects of the U.S. Constitution as well as the debate between Federalist No. 10 and Brutus No. 1 reflect the tension between the broad participatory model and the more filtered participation of the pluralist and elite models of representative democracy.

EK 1.2.A.3

The three models of representative democracy continue to be reflected in contemporary institutions and political behavior.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.A

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



OPTIONAL READING

- "Letters from the Federal Farmer #1" (Anti-Federalist publication)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources > [Analytical Reading \(Federalist No. 10 and Brutus No. 1\)](#)
- Professional Development > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 1: Source Analysis and Argumentation](#)

TOPIC 1.3

Government Power and Individual Rights

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.3.A

Explain Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.3.A.1

Federalists supported ratification of the Constitution and a strong central government. Madison's arguments in Federalist No. 10 focused on the superiority of a large republic in controlling the "mischiefs of faction," delegating authority to elected representatives and dispersing power between the states and national government.

EK 1.3.A.2

Anti-Federalists opposed the ratification of the Constitution and wanted more power reserved to state governments rather than a strong central government. Anti-Federalist writings, including Brutus No. 1, adhered to popular democratic theory that emphasized the benefits of a small, decentralized republic while warning of the dangers to personal liberty from a large, centralized government.

TOPIC 1.4

Challenges of the Articles of Confederation

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.4.A

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.


ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.4.A.1

Specific incidents and legal challenges that highlighted key weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation are represented by the:

- i. Lack of centralized military power to address Shays' Rebellion
- ii. Lack of an executive branch to enforce laws, including taxation
- iii. Lack of a national court system
- iv. Lack of power to regulate interstate commerce
- v. Lack of power to coin money

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Source Analysis*

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- State constitutions during the postcolonial period

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources > [Analytical Reading \(Articles of Confederation\)](#)

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Concept Application

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

TOPIC 1.5

Ratification of the U.S. Constitution

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.5.A

Explain the impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.5.A.1

Compromises deemed necessary for ratification of the Constitution included the following:

- i. Great (Connecticut) Compromise, which created a dual (bicameral) system of congressional representation with the House of Representatives based on each state's population and the Senate representing each state equally
- ii. Electoral College, which created a system for electing the president by electors from each state rather than by popular vote or by congressional vote
- iii. Three-Fifths Compromise, which provided a formula for calculating a state's enslaved population for purposes of representation in the House and for taxation
- iv. Postponing until 1808 a decision whether to ban the importation of enslaved persons
- v. Agreement to add a Bill of Rights to address concerns of the Anti-Federalists

EK 1.5.A.2

Debates about self-government during the drafting of the Constitution necessitated the drafting of an amendment process in Article V that entailed either a two-thirds vote in both houses or a proposal from two-thirds of the state legislatures, with final ratification determined by three-fourths of the states.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.5.A

Explain the impact of political negotiation and compromise at the Constitutional Convention on the development of the constitutional system.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.5.A.3


The compromises necessary to secure ratification of the Constitution left some matters unresolved that continue to generate discussion and debate today.

EK 1.5.A.4

The debate over the role of the national government, the powers of state governments, and the rights of individuals remains at the heart of present-day constitutional issues about democracy and governmental power, as represented by:

- i. Debates about government surveillance resulting from the federal government's response to the 9/11 attacks
- ii. Debates about the role of government in public school education

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993
- Impeachment proceedings against Presidents Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Bill Clinton
- Congressional response to the Obama administration's executive actions on immigration

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources > [Analytical Reading \(Federalist No. 51\)](#)

TOPIC 1.6

Principles of American Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.6.A

Explain the constitutional principles of separation of powers and checks and balances.

LO 1.6.B

Explain the effects of separation of powers and checks and balances for the U.S. political system.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.6.A.1

The specific and separate powers delegated to Congress, the president, and the courts allow each branch to check and balance the power of the other branches, ensuring no one branch becomes too powerful.

EK 1.6.A.2

Federalist No. 51 explains how constitutional provisions of separation of powers and checks and balances control potential abuses by majorities.

EK 1.6.B.1

Separation of powers and checks and balances creates multiple access points for stakeholders and institutions to influence public policy.

EK 1.6.B.2

Checks and balances and separation of powers allow legal actions to be taken against public officials deemed to have abused their power. Those legal actions include the process of impeachment (the House formally charges an official with abuse of power or misconduct) and removal (if the official is convicted in a Senate impeachment trial).

TOPIC 1.7

Relationship Between the States and National Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.7.A

Explain how the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments affects society.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.7.A.1

Federalism is the system of government in the United States in which power is shared between the national and state governments. The exclusive and concurrent powers of the national and state governments help explain the ongoing debate over the balance of power between the two levels.

EK 1.7.A.2

Exclusive power is held by only one level of government and includes enumerated powers that are written in the Constitution, and implied powers that are not specifically written in the Constitution but are inferred from the Necessary and Proper Clause.

EK 1.7.A.3

Reserved powers are those not delegated or enumerated to the national government but are reserved to the states, as stated in the Tenth Amendment.

EK 1.7.A.4


Concurrent powers are shared between both levels of government such as the power to collect taxes, the power to make and enforce laws and the power to build roads.

EK 1.7.A.5

The distribution of power between national and state governments is demonstrated by:

- i. Revenue sharing (national funding with almost no restrictions to the states on its use and is the least used form of funding)

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Argumentation*

5.A

Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- National Recovery Act of 1933
- Devolution revolution of the 1980s
- Federal response to natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy
- National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984
- State-level legalization of marijuana for personal use as in Colorado and Washington (2012)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources >
 - ♦ [Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment](#)

continued on next page

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 1.7.A**

Explain how the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments affects society.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- ii. Block grants (national funding with minimal restrictions to the states on its use and is preferred by the states)
- iii. Categorical grants (national funding that is restricted to specific categories of expenditures, is preferred by the national government, and is the most commonly used form of funding)
- iv. Mandates (requirements by the national government of the states)

TOPIC 1.8

Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.8.A

Explain how the balance of power between national and state governments has changed over time based on interpretations of the Supreme Court of the United States.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.8.A.1

The Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment give the national government the power to enforce protections for any person against the states, but Supreme Court interpretations can influence the extent of those protections.

EK 1.8.A.2

The Commerce Clause gives the national government the power to regulate interstate commerce, but Supreme Court interpretations can influence the extent of this power.

EK 1.8.A.3

The Necessary and Proper Clause gives Congress the power to make laws related to carrying out its enumerated powers, but Supreme Court interpretations can influence the extent of these powers.

EK 1.8.A.4

The Supremacy Clause gives the national government and its laws general precedence over states' laws, but Supreme Court interpretations may affect when specific actions exceed this constitutional power.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 **SCOTUS**
Application

2.A

Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.




OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Daniel Elazar, "Opening the Third Century of American Federalism: Issues and Prospects," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (1990)
- New Deal legislation
- Defense of Marriage Act of 1996 and state marriage laws
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
- Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and *United States v. Morrison* (2000)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources >
 - ♦ [Analytical Reading \(The Tenth Amendment to the United States\)](#)
 - ♦ [Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment](#)

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Argumentation*

5.B

Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources >
- ♦ [Federalism, the Commerce Clause, and the Tenth Amendment](#)

TOPIC 1.9

Federalism in Action

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 1.9.A

Explain how the distribution of powers between national and state governments impacts policymaking.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 1.9.A.1

The allocation of powers between national and state governments creates multiple access points for stakeholders and institutions to influence public policy.

EK 1.9.A.2

National policymaking is constrained by the sharing of concurrent powers with state governments.

**AP U.S. GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS**

UNIT 2

**Interactions
Among
Branches of
Government**



25–36%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING



~28/~14
CLASS PERIODS

The icon consists of a white circle containing a blue square with the letters 'AP' in white. Below the square is a small blue icon of a computer monitor.

Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 2

Multiple-choice: ~45 questions

Free-response: 3 questions

- Concept Application
- Quantitative Analysis
- SCOTUS Comparison

Interactions Among Branches of Government



Developing Understanding

BIG IDEA 1

Constitutionalism

- Which branch of government is the most powerful? Why?
- Are there really checks and balances when one political party controls all three branches of government? Why or why not?

BIG IDEA 4

Competing Policymaking Interests

- In what ways has the evolution of government powers affected Americans and their daily lives?

In this unit, students continue to explore policymaking, focusing on its complexity and the idea that it is a process involving multiple governmental institutions and actors. Students will look at issues or policies from several different perspectives and then apply their knowledge to better understand the complexity of the policymaking process.

The Constitution grants specific powers to Congress, the presidency, and the courts, each of which exercises informal powers (developed through political practice, tradition, and legislation). Because power is widely distributed, and checks prevent one branch from overreaching or usurping powers from the others, institutional actors are in the position where they must both compete and cooperate in order to govern.

Building the Course Skills

2.A 2.B 3.A 3.B

The gerrymandering cases in this unit provide an opportunity to introduce students to Supreme Court case analysis. It can help to start by having students describe the facts of the cases, focusing on the reasoning behind the majority opinion. Students often get stuck on the details of a case, or what they think is fair. Guide them to focus on the constitutional issues the justices applied when deciding the case. This focus will help students connect the details from a required case to other sources.

This unit also introduces students to data analysis. Provide opportunities for students to practice identifying data from different types of graphs. At this point in the course, you can have them practice identifying data, patterns, and trends in the data, and drawing conclusions. Students will need direction in order to know how to draw conclusions and apply information from data. Help them practice these skills by linking data to political behaviors using the different branches of government or budgets of bureaucratic agencies.

Preparing for the AP Exam

On the AP Exam, students will need to make connections between political concepts, Supreme Court cases, and arguments in text-based sources. One way that political scientists often think about those connections is to make comparisons between concepts, and students will need to make comparisons and draw conclusions on both the multiple-choice questions and the free-response questions.

When making comparisons, it's important for students to begin by identifying the relevant categories of comparison (i.e., what characteristic or attribute they should compare). Two common mistakes that students make are discussing similarities and differences that are 1) not relevant based on the given task or 2) not shared by the objects of comparison. Once students have identified an appropriate and relevant category of comparison, they can then develop their explanation of why the similarities or differences exist and why they are significant.

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
2.1 Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives	1.C Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
2.2 Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress	3.A Describe the data presented.
2.3 Congressional Behavior	2.A Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
2.4 Roles and Powers of the President	3.B Describe patterns and trends in data.
2.5 Checks on the Presidency	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
2.6 Expansion of Presidential Power	4.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
2.7 Presidential Communication	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
2.8 The Judicial Branch	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.
2.9 The Role of the Judicial Branch	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
2.10 The Court in Action	2.C Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.
2.11 Checks on the Judicial Branch	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
2.12 The Bureaucracy	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
2.13 Discretionary and Rulemaking Authority	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
2.14 Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable	3.C Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.
2.15 Policy and the Branches of Government	3.D Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



Go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 2. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	2.2	<p>Graphic Organizer</p> <p>Have students complete Venn diagrams comparing the structure, functions, and powers of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Make sure students use the graphic organizer thoughtfully and are not simply “filling in the blanks.”</p>
2	2.5	<p>Quickwrite</p> <p>As preparation for a free-response question (FRQ) in which students explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors in different contexts (such as in FRQ 1), have them quickwrite ways the president’s agenda can affect congressional behavior.</p>
3	2.11	<p>Socratic Seminar</p> <p>Use one of the essential questions, such as <i>Which branch of government is the most powerful? Why?</i>, to initiate a discussion in which students can illustrate their understanding of the learning objectives and essential knowledge statements.</p>
4	2.15	<p>Match Claims and Evidence</p> <p>In early stages of practicing argumentation, ask small groups of students to write claims and supporting evidence statements based on a question that resembles the argument essay prompt (such as one about whether the President or Congress has more power over the bureaucracy). Have groups trade claims and evidence, revise or modify the claims (if necessary), match the claims and evidence, and write statements explaining why the evidence supports the claim.</p>

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Concept Application

1.C

Compare political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985

TOPIC 2.1

Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.1.A

Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.1.A.1

Republicanism, the democratic principle that the will of the people is reflected in government debates and decisions by their representatives, is shown in the bicameral structure of Congress. The Senate is designed to represent states equally, while the House is designed to represent the people.

EK 2.1.A.2

Different membership sizes influence the formality of debate in each chamber. Debate in the House, which has 435 members, is more formal than in the Senate, with 100 members.

EK 2.1.A.3

Interactions in Congress are affected by the two-party system and term-length differences. One-third of the Senate is elected every two years, creating a continuous legislative body. All House members are elected every two years.

EK 2.1.A.4

The enumerated and implied powers in the Constitution allow Congress to participate in the public policy process by:

- Passing a federal budget, raising revenue by laying and collecting taxes, borrowing money, and coining money
- Declaring war and providing the funds necessary to maintain the armed forces

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.1.A

Describe the different structures, powers, and functions of each house of Congress.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- iii. Determining the process for naturalization by which people can become citizens of the U.S.
- iv. Regulating interstate commerce
- v. Creating federal courts and their jurisdictions
- vi. Enacting legislation under the authority of the necessary and proper clause
- vii. Conducting oversight of the executive branch, including federal agencies in the bureaucracy

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis

3.A

Describe the data presented.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Whips
- Calendar assignment
- Rider amendments

TOPIC 2.2

Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.2.A

Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policymaking process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.2.A.1

The structures and powers of the Senate and House are different by design. This difference directly affects the legislative process.

EK 2.2.A.2

Both chambers refer bills to committees, which conduct hearings and debate and mark up bills with revisions and additions. Leadership in committees is determined by the majority political party.

EK 2.2.A.3

Chamber-specific rules and procedures affect the legislative process.

- In the House, the Speaker is elected by a majority of members and presides over the legislative work in the House. All revenue bills must originate in the House. Rules for debate in the House on a bill are established by the Rules Committee. The House can form a Committee of the Whole in order to expedite debate on bills. An individual representative in the House can file a discharge petition to have a bill brought to the floor for debate, but it is rarely done.
- In the Senate, bills are typically brought to the floor by unanimous consent, but a Senator may request a hold on a bill to prevent it from getting to the floor for a vote. During debate, a Senator can use the filibuster (a tactic to prolong debate and delay or prevent a vote on a bill) or make a motion for cloture (a procedure to end a debate).

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.2.A

Explain how the structure, powers, and functions of both houses of Congress affect the policymaking process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- iii. When a bill passed by both chambers on the same topic has variation in its wording, a conference committee meets to reconcile those differences.

EK 2.2.A.4

Congress must generate a budget that addresses both mandatory and discretionary spending.

- i. Mandatory spending is required by law for entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.
- ii. Discretionary spending is approved on an annual basis for defense spending, education, and infrastructure. As entitlement costs grow, discretionary spending opportunities will decrease unless tax revenues increase, or the budget deficit increases.

EK 2.2.A.5

Pork-barrel legislation (funding for a local project in a larger appropriation bill) and logrolling (combining several pieces of legislation into one bill to secure enough votes for passage) affect the legislative process in both chambers.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Application

2.A

Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.



OPTIONAL READINGS

- David Mayhew's "Is Congress 'the Broken Branch'?" *Boston University Law Review* (2009)
- Barbara Sinclair's "From Sam Rayburn to Newt Gingrich: The Development of the Partisan Congress," Chapter 1 of *Party Wars: Polarization and the Politics of National Policy Making* (2011)

TOPIC 2.3

Congressional Behavior

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.3.A

Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.3.A.1

Congressional behavior and governing effectiveness are influenced by ideological divisions between political parties. Partisan voting (when members of Congress vote based on their political party affiliation) and polarization (when political attitudes move toward ideological extremes) can lead to gridlock (a situation in which no congressional action on legislation can be taken due to a lack of consensus).

EK 2.3.A.2

Gerrymandering, redistricting, and unequal representation of constituencies have been partially addressed by Supreme Court cases that opened the door for equal protection challenges to redistricting.

EK 2.3.A.3

Elections that have led to a divided government (when one party controls the presidency and the other party controls at least one of the chambers of Congress) can lead to more intense partisanship. This partisanship can result in members of Congress voting against presidential initiatives and appointments, especially those of a lame duck president.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.3.A

Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.3.A.4

Accountability to constituents in each chamber is affected by how representatives perceive their roles.

- i. A representative who conceives of their role as a trustee will vote on issues based on their own knowledge and judgement.
- ii. A representative acting as a delegate sees themselves as an agent of those who elected them and will vote on issues based on the interests of their constituents.
- iii. A politico uses a combination of these role conceptions.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis

3.B

Describe patterns and trends in data.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Professional Development > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 2: Concept Application and Data Analysis](#)

TOPIC 2.4

Roles and Powers of the President

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.4.A

Explain how the president can implement a policy agenda.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.4.A.1

Presidents use powers and perform functions of the office, with support from the Vice-President, Cabinet, and Executive Office of the President, to accomplish a policy agenda.

EK 2.4.A.2

The powers of the president include both formal and informal powers.

- Vetoes and pocket vetoes are formal powers that enable the president to check Congress, but vetoes can be overridden with a 2/3 vote while pocket vetoes cannot be overridden with a 2/3 vote.
- Foreign policy powers that influence relations with foreign nations are both formal (commander-in-chief and treaties) and informal (executive agreements).
- Bargaining and persuasion are informal powers that enable the president to secure congressional action.
- Executive orders allow the president to manage the federal government and are implied by the president's vested executive power or by power delegated by Congress.
- Signing statements are informal powers that inform Congress and the public of the president's interpretation of laws passed by Congress and signed by the president.

TOPIC 2.5

Checks on the Presidency

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.5.A

Explain how the president's agenda can create tension and frequent confrontations with Congress.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.5.A.1

Senate confirmation is an important check on appointment powers but there can be a potential for conflict based on who is chosen by the president for appointments, including:

- i. Cabinet members
- ii. Ambassadors
- iii. Some positions within the Executive Office of the President
- iv. Supreme Court Justices, Court of Appeals judges, and District Court judges


EK 2.5.A.2

Senate confirmation is an important check on appointment powers, but the president's longest lasting influence lies in life-tenured judicial appointments.

EK 2.5.A.3

Policy conflicts with the congressional agenda (the formal list of policies Congress is considering at any given time) can lead the president to use executive orders and directives to the bureaucracy to address the president's own agenda items.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.




ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Conflicts in Vietnam, Iraq, Kosovo, Libya, Syria
- No Child Left Behind Act (2001)
- Appointments of Sandra Day O'Connor and Thurgood Marshall
- Failed appointments: Robert Bork, John Tower, and Abe Fortas

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Professional Development > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 2: Concept Application and Data Analysis](#)

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.A

Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.



OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt's State of the Union Address (1941)
- William Howard Taft's *Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers* (1916)
- *Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography* (1913)

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources > [Analytical Reading \(Federalist No. 70\)](#)

TOPIC 2.6

Expansion of Presidential Power

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.6.A

Explain how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.6.A.1

Federalist No. 70 offers justification for a single executive by arguing a strong executive is “essential to the protection of the country against foreign attacks, to the steady administration of the laws, to the protection of property, and to the security of liberty.”

EK 2.6.A.2

Passage of the Twenty-Second Amendment, which established presidential term limits, demonstrates concern about the expansion of presidential power.


EK 2.6.A.3

Different perspectives on the presidential role, ranging from a limited to a more expansive interpretation and use of power, continue to be debated in the context of contemporary events.

TOPIC 2.7

Presidential Communication

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- President Reagan's televised "Address to the Nation on Federal Tax Reduction" (1981)

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.7.A

Explain how communication technology has changed the president's relationship with the national constituency and the other branches.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.7.A.1

The impact of presidential communication has increased with advances in communication technology.

- Modern technology, such as social media, allows for rapid responses to political issues.
- Nationally broadcast State of the Union messages and the president's bully pulpit are tools for agenda setting that use the media to influence public views about which policies are the most important.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Application

2.B

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Classroom Resources >
- ♦ Analytical Reading
(Federalist No. 78)

TOPIC 2.8

The Judicial Branch

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 2.8.A**

Explain the principle of judicial review and how it checks the power of other branches.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 2.8.A.1**

The foundation for powers of the judicial branch and the argument for how its independence checks the power of other branches is set forth in the following documents, respectively:

- Article III of the Constitution
- Federalist No. 78

TOPIC 2.9

The Role of the Judicial Branch

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Martin v. Hunter's Lessee* (1816)
- New Deal conflict (Congress)
- *United States v. Nixon* (1974)

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.9.A

Explain the role of legal precedent in judicial decision making.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.9.A.1

Stare decisis (the legal doctrine under which courts follow legal precedents when deciding cases with similar facts) plays an important role in judicial decision making.

EK 2.9.A.2

Ideological changes in the composition of the Supreme Court due to presidential appointments have led to the Court's establishing new or rejecting existing precedents.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Application

2.C

Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.

TOPIC 2.10

The Court in Action

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.10.A

Explain how life tenure can lead to debate about the Supreme Court's power.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.10.A.1

Life tenure for justices allows the court to function independent of the current political climate. As a result of this independence, the Court can deliver controversial or unpopular court decisions, which in turn can lead to debate about the court's power.

TOPIC 2.11

Checks on the Judicial Branch

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application***1.D**

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1970)
- *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974)
- Franklin Roosevelt's court-packing plan
- Sixteenth Amendment and federal income tax

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 2.11.A**

Explain how the exercise of judicial review can lead to debate about the Supreme Court's power.

LO 2.11.B

Explain how other branches in the government can limit the Supreme Court's power.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 2.11.A.1**

Political discussion about the Supreme Court's power is illustrated by the ongoing debate over differing interpretations of judicial review.


- i. Judicial activism asserts that judicial review allows the courts to overturn current Constitutional and case precedent or invalidate legislative or executive acts.
- ii. Judicial restraint asserts that judicial review should be constrained to decisions that adhere to current Constitutional and case precedent.

EK 2.11.B.1

Restrictions on the Supreme Court are represented by:

- i. Congressional legislation to modify the impact of prior Supreme Court decisions
- ii. Ratification of a Constitutional amendment
- iii. Judicial appointments and confirmations which may shift the ideological balance of the court
- iv. The president and states delaying implementation of a Supreme Court decision
- v. Enacting legislation to limit the cases the Supreme Court can hear on appeal by removing the court's jurisdiction over a case

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- Pendleton Civil Service Act (1883)
- Transportation Safety Administration (TSA)

TOPIC 2.12

The Bureaucracy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.12.A

Explain how the bureaucracy carries out the responsibilities of the federal government.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.12.A.1

The federal bureaucracy is composed of departments, agencies, commissions, and government corporations that implement policy by:

- Writing and enforcing regulations
- Issuing fines
- Testifying before Congress
- Forming iron triangles (alliances of congressional committees, bureaucratic agencies, and interest groups that are prominent in specific policy areas)
- Creating issue networks (temporary coalitions that form to promote a common issue or agenda)


EK 2.12.A.2

The civil service primarily uses a merit system that prioritizes hiring and promotion based on professionalism, specialization, and neutrality, as opposed to political patronage, whereby bureaucratic jobs are politically appointed.

TOPIC 2.13

Discretionary and Rulemaking Authority

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application***1.D**

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.13.A

Explain how the federal bureaucracy uses delegated discretionary authority for rulemaking and implementation.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.13.A.1

The federal bureaucracy uses discretionary power as delegated by Congress to interpret and implement policies. Through their rulemaking authority, federal bureaucratic agencies utilize their discretion to create and enforce regulations. Bureaucratic agencies include:

- i. Department of Homeland Security
- ii. Department of Transportation
- iii. Department of Veterans Affairs
- iv. Department of Education
- v. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- vi. Federal Elections Commission (FEC)
- vii. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis

3.C

Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Oversight of intelligence agencies following the 9/11 terrorist attacks
- Joint committees
- Budget and Impoundment Control Act (1974)
- Lyndon B. Johnson's Executive Order 11246 (Affirmative Action and Government Contracts)
- EPA Superfund management under the Reagan administration

TOPIC 2.14

Holding the Bureaucracy Accountable

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.14.A

Explain how Congress uses its oversight power in its relationship with the executive branch.

LO 2.14.B

Explain how the president ensures that executive branch agencies and departments carry out their responsibilities in concert with the goals of the administration.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.14.A.1

Congressional oversight of the bureaucracy to ensure that legislation is implemented as intended includes:

- Review, monitoring, and supervision of bureaucratic agencies
- Investigation and committee hearings of bureaucratic activity
- Power of the purse (the ability of Congress to check the bureaucracy by appropriating or withholding funds)

EK 2.14.A.2

As a means to curtail the use of presidential power, congressional oversight serves as a check of executive authorization.

EK 2.14.B.1

Presidential ideology, authority, and influence affect how executive branch agencies carry out the goals of the administration.

EK 2.14.B.2

Compliance monitoring ensures that funds are being used properly and regulations are being followed. Compliance monitoring can pose a challenge to policy implementation.

TOPIC 2.15
Policy and the Branches of Government

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 2.15.A

Explain the extent to which governmental branches can hold the bureaucracy accountable given the competing interests of Congress, the president, and the federal courts.

LO 2.15.B

Explain how the distribution of powers among the three branches of government impacts policymaking.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 2.15.A.1

Formal and informal powers of Congress, the president, and the courts over the bureaucracy are used to maintain its accountability.

EK 2.15.B.1

The allocation of powers among the three branches of government creates multiple access points for stakeholders and institutions to influence public policy.

EK 2.15.B.2

National policymaking is constrained by the sharing of powers between the three branches.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Data Analysis*

3.D

Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- Legislative veto

**AP U.S. GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS**

UNIT 3

**Civil Liberties
and Civil
Rights**



13–18%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING



~26/~13
CLASS PERIODS

The icon consists of the letters 'AP' in a bold, blue font, centered within a white square. This square is itself centered within a larger white circle. The entire graphic is set against a light blue background.

Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 3

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions

Free-response: 3 questions

- SCOTUS Comparison
- Argument Essay (partial)
- Argument Essay (partial)

Civil Liberties and Civil Rights



Developing Understanding

BIG IDEA 1

Constitutionalism

- In what ways does the Constitution attempt to limit abuse of government powers?

BIG IDEA 3

Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy

- How can individuals and groups help protect civil liberties and civil rights?

BIG IDEA 4

Competing Policymaking Interests

- Why have Supreme Court decisions about civil liberties and civil rights changed over time?

Students will connect the founding principles of our government to the debates over the appropriate balance of liberty and order, noting how citizens and other groups have pursued policy solutions to protect the civil liberties and civil rights of all Americans, laying the foundation for later discussions about other ways citizens can participate in the government.

The U.S. Constitution, primarily through the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment, protects the civil liberties and civil rights of citizens, though the extent of those protections and the need to protect the safety and general welfare of individuals has long been debated. Through social movements, legal challenges, and acts of Congress, citizens have attempted to restrict the government from unduly infringing on individual rights and from denying equal protection under the law.

Building the Course Skills

2.C 5.A 5.B

This unit focuses on the analysis and application of SCOTUS cases. In addition to knowing the facts and decision of the required SCOTUS cases, students should analyze the majority opinion, focusing on the constitutional issues (such as the various interpretations of the Bill of Rights, including the due process clause) considered by the justices. This level of knowledge allows students to think like political scientists and compare two cases that relate to the same constitutional issue and draw conclusions about why the Supreme Court may have ruled in a similar or different way in each case.

Students continue to develop the skill of argumentation in this unit by using relevant evidence to support their claim. When using documents as evidence, students should not focus on summarizing the content of a document, but instead on explaining the significance of the evidence and explaining how and why it supports the claim and line of reasoning.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The SCOTUS comparison free-response question on the AP Exam asks students to go beyond simply identifying the similarities and differences between cases. They apply information from a required case and explain how that information is relevant to a non-required case. Then, students demonstrate the ability to transfer understanding of political concepts, behaviors, or processes from a required Supreme Court case to a non-required one.

Students should be able to use the required Supreme Court cases in other ways, such as applying knowledge about a required case to a reading, a scenario, and possibly a political cartoon. Students often struggle with analyzing political cartoons. They should practice interpreting visual clues and then using these clues to determine the argument and relate it to political principles, institutions, processes, or behaviors.

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
3.1 The Bill of Rights	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
3.2 First Amendment: Freedom of Religion	2.A Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.
3.3 First Amendment: Freedom of Speech	5.A Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
3.4 First Amendment: Freedom of the Press	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.
3.5 Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms	4.A Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.
3.6 Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety	5.B Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.
3.7 Selective Incorporation	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources
3.8 Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused	5.C Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.
3.9 Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy	1.A Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
3.10 Social Movements and Equal Protection	4.C Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
3.11 Government Responses to Social Movements	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.
3.12 Balancing Minority and Majority Rights	2.C Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.
3.13 Affirmative Action	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.



Go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 3.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 143 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	3.2	<p>Graphic Organizer</p> <p>To practice comparing required Supreme Court cases to a related case, give students a pair of cases—for example, <i>Wisconsin v. Yoder</i> (1972) and <i>Oregon v. Smith</i> (1990)—and have them use a Venn diagram to come up with similarities and differences between the cases. Guide students to use valid categories for comparison, such as facts, majority opinion, and the reasoning (constitutional question) for the majority opinion.</p>
2	3.3	<p>Think-Pair-Share</p> <p>To practice comparing required Supreme Court cases to a related case, give students a pair of cases—for example, <i>Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District</i> (1969) and <i>Bethel School District No. 403 v. Fraser</i> and have them use Think-Pair-Share to come up with similarities, differences, and relevance to political institutions or processes.</p>
3	3.10	<p>Fishbowl</p> <p>Ask students to discuss the arguments presented in “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” Have some students form an inner circle to discuss how the arguments relate to political activism and how citizens can affect our government and its policies. The remaining students will form an outer circle to listen, respond, and evaluate.</p>
4	3.11	<p>Matching Claims and Evidence</p> <p>Ask small groups of students to write claims and supporting evidence statements based on an argument essay question (such as <i>Which had more of an impact on the expansion of civil rights: an activist Supreme Court, a motivated legislature, or movements by citizens?</i>). Have groups trade claims and evidence, revise or modify the claims (if necessary), match the claims and evidence, and write statements explaining why the evidence supports the claim.</p>

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

TOPIC 3.1

The Bill of Rights

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.1.A

Explain how the U.S. Constitution protects individual liberties and rights.

LO 3.1.B

Describe the rights protected in the Bill of Rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.1.A.1

The U.S. Constitution includes a Bill of Rights specifically designed to protect individual liberties and rights.

EK 3.1.A.2

Civil liberties are constitutionally established guarantees and freedoms that protect citizens, opinions, and property against arbitrary government interference.

EK 3.1.A.3

The application of the Bill of Rights is continuously interpreted by the courts.

EK 3.1.B.1

The Bill of Rights consists of the first ten Amendments to the Constitution, which enumerate the liberties and rights of individuals.

TOPIC 3.2

First Amendment: Freedom of Religion

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Application

2.A

Describe the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of required Supreme Court cases.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.2.A


Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to religious liberty.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.2.A.1

The interpretation and application of the First Amendment’s establishment and free exercise clauses reflect an ongoing tension between government power to make law and an individual’s right to religious freedom.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Argumentation

5.A

Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943)
- *Morse v. Frederick* (2007)

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Professional Development >
- ♦ [Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 3: SCOTUS Analysis](#)

TOPIC 3.3

First Amendment: Freedom of Speech

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.3.A

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to free speech.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.3.A.1

The Supreme Court has held that speech, including symbolic speech (nonverbal action that communicates an idea or belief), is protected by the First Amendment.

EK 3.3.A.2


Efforts to balance social order and individual freedom are reflected in interpretations of the First Amendment that limit speech, including:

- Time, place, and manner regulations that impose restrictions such as limits on the time of day an event can be held, limits on where an event can be held, and limits on the noise levels at an event
- Limitations on some obscene and offensive communication.
- Protections against defamation (language that harms the reputation of another) including libel (written communication) and slander (oral communication).
- Restrictions on speech that create a clear and present danger and subsequent interpretations which have refined those restrictions.

TOPIC 3.4

First Amendment: Freedom of the Press

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

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.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.4.A


Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment reflects a commitment to individual liberty.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.4.A.1

The Supreme Court bolstered the freedom of the press, affirming support for a heavy presumption against prior restraint even in cases involving national security.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.A

Describe the argument, perspective, evidence, and reasoning presented in the source.

TOPIC 3.5

Second Amendment: Right to Bear Arms

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 3.5.A**

Explain the extent to which the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Second Amendment reflects a commitment to individual liberty.


ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 3.5.A.1**

The Supreme Court's decisions on the Second Amendment rest upon its constitutional interpretation of the right to bear arms.

TOPIC 3.6

Amendments: Balancing Individual Freedom with Public Order and Safety

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Argumentation

5.B

Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.6.A

Explain how the Supreme Court has attempted to balance claims of individual freedom with laws and enforcement procedures that promote public order and safety.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.6.A.1

Court decisions defining cruel and unusual punishment involve interpretation of the Eighth Amendment and its application to death penalty statutes.

EK 3.6.A.2

The debate about the Second and Fourth Amendments involves concerns about public safety and whether or not the government regulation of firearms or collection of digital metadata promotes or interferes with public safety and individual rights.

SUGGESTED SKILL SCOTUS Application**2.B**

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.

**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE
(NOT REQUIRED)**

- Bans on polygamy and use of peyote in religious ceremonies

TOPIC 3.7**Selective Incorporation****Required Course Content****LEARNING OBJECTIVE****LO 3.7.A**

Explain the implications of the doctrine of selective incorporation.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 3.7.A.1**

The doctrine of selective incorporation has imposed limitations on state regulation of civil liberties by extending select protections of the Bill of Rights to the states through the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

TOPIC 3.8

Amendments: Due Process and the Rights of the Accused

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.8.A

Explain the extent to which the government is limited by procedural due process from infringing upon individual rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.8.A.1

The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments include clauses which state that the government may not infringe on a person's right to life, liberty, or property without due process of law. The due process clause in the Fifth Amendment applies to the national government and the due process clause in the Fourteenth Amendment applies to states. Some government interests may justify the restriction of individual rights; for example, speech can be limited when it is shown to present a danger to public safety.

EK 3.8.A.2

Procedural due process requires that government officials use methods that are not arbitrary when making and carrying out decisions affecting constitutionally protected rights. These procedural due process protections are reinforced by key protections enshrined in other provisions of the Bill of Rights and key legal doctrines established by the Supreme Court. For example, the Miranda rule requires accused persons to be informed of some procedural protections found in the Fifth and Sixth Amendments prior to interrogation. However, these procedural protections are not absolute. A public safety exception has been sanctioned by the Court that allows unwarned interrogation to stand as direct evidence in court.

SUGGESTED SKILL
 **Argumentation**
5.C

Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.


**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE
(NOT REQUIRED)**

- *Riley v. California* (2014)

continued on next page

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 3.8.A**

Explain the extent to which the government is limited by procedural due process from infringing upon individual rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 3.8.A.3**

Procedural rights of the accused and the prohibition of unreasonable searches and seizures are intended to ensure that individual liberties are not eclipsed by the need for social order and security, including:

- i. The right to legal counsel, speedy and public trial, and an impartial jury
- ii. Protection against warrantless searches of cell phone data under the Fourth Amendment
- iii. Limitations placed on bulk collection of telecommunication metadata (Patriot and USA Freedom Acts)

EK 3.8.A.4

Procedural due process also protects the rights of the accused during a trial. The Bill of Rights guarantees the right to an attorney and protection from unreasonable searches and seizures. The exclusionary rule, as decided by the Supreme Court, stipulates that evidence illegally seized by law enforcement officers in violation of the suspect's Fourth Amendment rights (including the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures) cannot be used against that suspect in criminal prosecution.

TOPIC 3.9

Amendments: Due Process and the Right to Privacy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.9.A

Explain the extent to which the government is limited by substantive due process from infringing upon individual rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.9.A.1

Over time, the Supreme Court has recognized constitutionally protected rights that are not explicitly listed in the Bill of Rights. These unenumerated rights include the right to privacy. Justices and scholars have drawn on several arguments to defend the existence of unenumerated rights. Some argue that an unenumerated right is implied by certain amendments that assume the existence of such rights. Others argue that the Ninth Amendment, which states that individuals have protected rights beyond those listed in the first eight amendments, provides support for the existence of unenumerated rights.

In a range of cases, the Supreme Court has used substantive due process to examine whether government laws and actions are arbitrary infringements of individual rights.

EK 3.9.A.2

While a right to privacy is not explicitly named in the Constitution, the Supreme Court, in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), interpreted the due process clause to protect the right of privacy from government infringement. In *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the Supreme Court held that the application of substantive due process further extended the privacy right to abortion. The Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) overturned *Roe v. Wade*, holding that the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion, leaving decisions about the regulation of abortion to legislatures. The actions that are protected by the right to privacy and substantive due process continue to be debated.


SUGGESTED SKILL
 *Concept Application*
1.A

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.


**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)**

- *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925)
- Hyde Amendment of 1976 barred the use of certain federal funds to pay for abortions outside of incest, rape, or endangerment to the life of the pregnant woman
- *Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County v. Earls* (2008)

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.C

Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Equal treatment in public accommodations (Title II), equal employment opportunities (Title VII), and opportunities for women to participate in athletics (Title IX)
- *Reed v. Reed* (1971)
- Hatch Amendment (proposed 1981)

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources > [Analytical Reading](#) ("Letter from a Birmingham Jail")

TOPIC 3.10

Social Movements and Equal Protection

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.10.A

Explain how constitutional provisions have supported and motivated social movements.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.10.A.1

Civil rights protect individuals from discrimination based on characteristics such as race, national origin, religion, and sex; these rights are guaranteed to all persons under the due process and equal protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution, as well as acts of Congress.

EK 3.10.A.2

The civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, and advocacy for LGBTQ rights are evidence of how the equal protection clause can support and motivate social movements, as represented by:

- Dr. Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and the civil rights movement of the 1960s
- The National Organization for Women and the women's rights movement
- The pro-life and pro-choice movements

TOPIC 3.11

Government Responses to Social Movements

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Application**2.B**

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 3.11.A**

Explain how the government has responded to social movements.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 3.11.A.1**

The government can respond to social movements through court rulings and/or policies.

- i. Supreme Court decisions which declared that race-based school segregation violates the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause.
- ii. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination in public places, provides for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and makes employment discrimination illegal.
- iii. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.
- iv. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits racial discrimination in voting.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Application

2.C

Explain how the facts, issue, holding, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of a required Supreme Court case compare to a non-required Supreme Court case.

TOPIC 3.12

Balancing Minority and Majority Rights

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.12.A

Explain how the Court has at times allowed the restriction of the civil rights of minority groups and at other times has protected those rights.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.12.A.1

Decisions demonstrating that minority rights have been restricted at times and protected at other times include:

- i. State laws and Supreme Court holdings based on the “separate but equal” doctrine restricting African American access to the same restaurants, hotels, schools, etc., as the majority white population
- ii. Court decisions declaring that race-based school segregation violates the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection clause
- iii. The Supreme Court upholding the rights of the majority in cases that limit and prohibit majority-minority districting

TOPIC 3.13

Affirmative Action

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974)
- *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007)
- *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978)
- *Gratz v. Bollinger and Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003)

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 3.13.A

Describe Supreme Court debates about affirmative action policies.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 3.13.A.1

Affirmative action refers to policies intended to address workplace and educational disparities related to race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, and age. Supreme Court debate has focused on whether affirmative action is protected by the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

**AP U.S. GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS**

UNIT 4

**American
Political
Ideologies
and Beliefs**



10–15%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING



~22/~11
CLASS PERIODS

The icon consists of a white circle containing a blue square with the letters 'AP' in white. Below the square is a small blue icon of a computer monitor.

Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 4

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions

Free-response: 3 questions

- Concept Application
- Quantitative Analysis
- Quantitative Analysis

American Political Ideologies and Beliefs



Developing Understanding

BIG IDEA 4 *Competing Policymaking Interests*

- How do our core beliefs about the role of government affect our behavior?
- How does our view of what freedom is shape our opinions?

BIG IDEA 5 *Methods of Political Analysis*

- Why are some opinion polls better than others?
- How can policymakers use information from political science to make decisions?

Connecting the application of political science methods to the development of social and economic policies that Americans support, advocate for, and adopt is foundational to understanding the ideologies of political parties and patterns of political participation. American political 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. These beliefs about government, politics, and the individual's role in the political system influence the creation of public policies.

Building the Course Skills

3.C 3.D 4.C

This unit provides a great opportunity to integrate data analysis with an investigation of American attitudes about government and politics, how those attitudes develop and change over time, and how political scientists measure and evaluate political attitudes and behaviors. Students should be able to correctly interpret and connect what they see in the data to course concepts in order to draw conclusions. Drawing conclusions requires students to make inferences based on the patterns and trends in the data and their knowledge of political concepts.

This is also a good time to have students analyze political concepts from secondary sources and explain how they relate to a political concept. Books by political scientists, opinion pieces in major publications, and scholarly online articles will often connect to current events and be a great resource. Students should analyze the argument, considering how the author responds to opposing or differing perspectives.

Preparing for the AP Exam

The AP Exam requires students to analyze quantitative data presented visually and apply that analysis to their understanding of political concepts in both the multiple-choice and free-response sections.

In both types of questions, students will need to be able to: (1) identify and describe the data, (2) describe patterns or trends in data, (3) draw conclusions about patterns or trends in data, and (4) explain how the data relates or demonstrates a political concept, principle, or behavior.

Students often struggle to connect conclusions drawn from data to political concepts, such as behavior. Encourage them to take their conclusions further and explain the relationship. Political scientists use data and their knowledge of political institutions and processes to explain how, for example, members of a political party, voters, or interest groups may react to certain public opinion data.

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skill
4.1 American Attitudes About Government and Politics	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
4.2 Political Socialization	3.A Describe the data presented.
4.3 Changes in Ideology	3.B Describe patterns and trends in data.
4.4 Influence of Political Events on Ideology	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
4.5 Measuring Public Opinion	3.C Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.
4.6 Evaluating Public Opinion Data	3.D Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
4.7 Ideologies of Political Parties	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
4.8 Ideology and Policymaking	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.
4.9 Ideology and Economic Policy	3.E Explain possible limitations of the data provided.
4.10 Ideology and Social Policy	4.C Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



Go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 4.
Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	4.1	<p>Close Read</p> <p>Have students read an excerpt from a secondary political source, such as a news article or a book by a political theorist, that is related to political socialization. Ideas can be found in the optional readings on the topic pages. Have students identify the writer’s argument and the evidence used to support that argument, and relate the argument to a political behavior.</p>
2	4.2	<p>Discussion Group</p> <p>Assign students to groups to discuss the learning objective from this topic—<i>Explain how cultural factors influence political attitudes and socialization</i>—with the view to help them develop new understandings by hearing the views of their classmates. After discussion, ask groups to present their conclusions on the factors and whether or not their group reached a consensus.</p>
3	4.5	<p>Create Representation</p> <p>Give groups of students data from a few current public opinion polls and ask the groups to create a visual representation of the data. Let students decide the best type of visual (graph, table, etc.) to use and make sure they correctly label the visual. To ensure understanding, have groups trade with each other and review the graphs.</p>
4	4.6 and 4.8	<p>Guided Discussion</p> <p>This topic offers a lot of fodder for discussion about how political actors use polling data. You can use brainstorming and quickwrite as strategies during a guided discussion in which you help students understand fiscal policy polling data and how the data may affect political behavior.</p>

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.



OPTIONAL READINGS

- Alexis de Tocqueville's "The Origin of the Anglo-Americans" and "Social Condition of the Anglo-Americans," Chapters 2 and 3 of *Democracy in America* (1835)
- Suzanne Mettler's *Confronting the Submerged State* (2011)
- George Will's *Statecraft as Soulcraft: What Government Does* (1983)

TOPIC 4.1

American Attitudes About Government and Politics

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 4.1.A**

Explain the relationship between core beliefs of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.


ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 4.1.A.1**

Different interpretations of core values, including individualism (each person has the ability to shape their life and destiny through the choices they make), equality of opportunity (all people are given an equal chance to compete), free enterprise (the market determines prices, products, and services), and rule of law (every person, even those in power, must follow and is accountable to the same laws that govern all), affect the relationship between citizens and the federal government and that citizens have with each other.

TOPIC 4.2

Political Socialization

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis**3.A**

Describe the data presented.



OPTIONAL READINGS

- Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* (1995)
- Participating in Scouts or serving on a school board
- Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat 3.0* (2007) or Joseph Stiglitz's *Making Globalization Work* (2006)
- Matt Barreto and Gary Segura's *Latino America: How America's Most Dynamic Population Is Poised to Transform the Politics of the Nation* (2014)

Required Course Content**LEARNING OBJECTIVE****LO 4.2.A**

Explain how cultural factors influence political socialization.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 4.2.A.1**

Political socialization refers to the process by which individuals develop political beliefs, values, opinions, and behaviors. 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.

EK 4.2.A.2

U.S. political culture is defined by its democratic ideals, principles, and core values. As a result of globalization, U.S. political culture has both influenced and been influenced by the values of other countries.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis**3.B**

Describe patterns and trends in data.



OPTIONAL READING

- Cathy J. Cohen's *Democracy Remixed: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics* (2010)

TOPIC 4.3

Changes in Ideology

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 4.3.A**

Explain how social factors impact political ideology.


ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 4.3.A.1**

Generational effects (experiences shared by people of a common age) and life cycle effects (experiences a person encounters during different life stages) contribute to the development of a person's political ideology.

TOPIC 4.4

Influence of Political Events on Ideology

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.4.A

Explain how major political events influence political ideology.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.4.A.1

Major political events can influence the development of individual political attitudes, which is an example of political socialization. Political socialization, in turn, influences political ideology.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis

3.C

Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.



AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources >
[Data Analysis \(Measuring Public Opinion Data\)](#)

TOPIC 4.5

Measuring Public Opinion

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.5.A

Describe the elements of a scientific poll.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.5.A.1

Public opinion data that can affect elections and policy debates is influenced by different types of scientific polls such as:

- Opinion polls (measuring public opinion on various issues)
- Benchmark polls (creating baseline views of a candidate)
- Tracking polls (following how views of a candidate change during a campaign)
- Exit polls (collecting data on why people voted the way they did)

EK 4.5.A.2

Public opinion data that can affect elections and policy debates is influenced by polling methodology. Polling methodology is more precise when it includes:

- Accurate sampling methods, including calculating a margin of error
- Neutral framing of questions (specific and unbiased wording of questions)
- Accurate reporting (clear reporting and conclusions that can be supported by the data)

TOPIC 4.6

Evaluating Public Opinion Data

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Data Analysis*

3.D

Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Carter–Reagan election of 1980
- Obama–Romney election of 2012
- Clinton–Trump election of 2016

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.6.A

Explain the quality and credibility of claims based on public opinion data.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.6.A.1

The relationship between scientific polling and elections and policy debates is affected by the:

- i. Importance of public opinion as a source of political influence in a given election or policy debate
- ii. Reliability and veracity of public opinion data

SUGGESTED SKILL *Concept Application***1.E**

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

TOPIC 4.7**Ideologies of Political Parties****Required Course Content****LEARNING OBJECTIVE****LO 4.7.A**

Explain how ideologies of the two major parties shape policy debates.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 4.7.A.1**

The Democratic Party (D or DEM) platforms generally align more closely to liberal ideological positions, and the Republican Party (R or GOP) platforms generally align more closely to conservative ideological positions.

TOPIC 4.8

Ideology and Policymaking

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.8.A

Explain how U.S. political culture (e.g., democratic ideals, principles, and core values) influences the formation, goals, and implementation of public policy over time.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE


EK 4.8.A.1

Because the U.S. is a democracy with a diverse society, public policies generated at any given time reflect the attitudes and beliefs of citizens who choose to participate in politics at that time.

EK 4.8.A.2

The balancing dynamic of individual liberty and government efforts to promote stability and order has been reflected in policy debates and their outcomes over time.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

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.



OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Seymour Martin Lipset's "Ideology, Politics, and Deviance," Chapter 1 of *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (1996)
- Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996
- DREAM Act and debate over making English the official national language
- Multiculturalism versus assimilation

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis

3.E

Explain possible limitations of the data provided.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Ideological positions on the inheritance tax
- Ideological positions on the minimum wage

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Professional Development > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 4: Data Analysis](#)

TOPIC 4.9

Ideology and Economic Policy

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.9.A

Explain how different political ideologies affect the role of government in regulating the marketplace.

LO 4.9.B

Explain how fiscal and monetary policy actions influence economic conditions.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.9.A.1

Liberal ideologies favor more governmental regulation of the marketplace, conservative ideologies favor fewer regulations, and libertarian ideologies favor little or no regulation of the marketplace beyond the protection of property rights and voluntary trade.

EK 4.9.B.1

Fiscal policy consists of actions taken by Congress and the president to influence economic conditions and includes Keynesian and supply-side positions.


EK 4.9.B.2

Monetary policy consists of actions taken by the Federal Reserve (the Fed) to influence interest rates which affect broader economic conditions. The Fed is an independent agency which seeks to achieve maximum employment and price stability.

TOPIC 4.10

Ideology and Social Policy

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.C

Explain how the implications of the argument or perspective in the source may affect political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992)
- Ideological positions on school vouchers litigated in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002)
- Differing state requirements for marriage and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) ruling on same-sex marriage

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 4.10.A

Explain how political ideologies vary on the role of the government in addressing social issues.

LO 4.10.B

Explain how different ideologies affect policy on social issues.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 4.10.A.1

Liberal ideologies generally favor more national government involvement to address some social issues such as education and public health, with less responsibility for these issues left to state governments.

EK 4.10.A.2

Conservative ideologies generally favor less national government involvement to address some social issues such as education and public health, with more responsibility for these issues left to state governments.

EK 4.10.A.3

Libertarian ideologies generally favor little national or state government involvement except when national or state government is protecting private property or individual liberty.

EK 4.10.B.1

Policy trends concerning the level of government involvement in social issues reflect the success of conservative or liberal perspectives in political parties.

**AP U.S. GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS**

UNIT 5

**Political
Participation**



20–27%
AP EXAM WEIGHTING



~18/~9
CLASS PERIODS

The icon consists of a white circle containing a blue square with the letters 'AP' in white. Below the square is a small blue monitor icon with two vertical lines representing a screen.

Remember to go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign students the online **Progress Check** for this unit.

Whether assigned as homework or completed in class, the **Progress Check** provides each student with immediate feedback related to this unit's topics and skills.

Progress Check 5

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions

Free-response: 3 questions

- Quantitative Analysis
- Argument Essay
- Argument Essay

Political Participation



Developing Understanding

BIG IDEA 3

Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy

- Why do some people choose to participate in government while others do not?
- How does your social network affect your political beliefs?

BIG IDEA 4

Competing Policymaking Interests

- Why might you join a political party? Why might you choose not to?

BIG IDEA 5

Methods of Political Analysis

- How does who you are affect whether you participate or not?

Students should understand the many ways that they can influence policymakers and impact the decisions that will affect their daily lives.

The principle of rule by the people is the bedrock of the American political system and requires that citizens engage and participate in the development of policy. Under our Constitution, governing is achieved directly through citizen participation, although there are institutions (e.g., political parties, interest groups, and mass media) that inform, organize, and mobilize support to influence government and politics, resulting in many venues for citizen influence on policymaking.

Building the Course Skills

3.D 5.A 5.B 5.C 5.D

Throughout the course, students have been gradually introduced to argumentation and have had regular opportunities to practice this skill. In this unit, students continue to write defensible claims, support claims with relevant evidence, and establish a line of reasoning, but now also use refutation or rebuttal when they respond to alternative perspectives.

Just as political scientists do in their arguments, students should be able to identify an opposing or alternate perspective about a political principle, institution, process, or behavior and use evidence to explain why that perspective is not as valid or credible as their own claim.

As students build toward more complex skills, it helps to ask them to identify and explain limitations they discover when analyzing and interpreting quantitative data. Limitations can include data from a limited demographic, opt-in polling (like on social media), a biased polling source, the way questions were asked, and more.

Preparing for the AP Exam

To complete their argument essays, students will respond to an opposing or alternative perspective. It is not enough for students to simply identify an opposing or alternative perspective. They must demonstrate a correct understanding of the perspective by briefly describing it, and then refute or rebut that perspective.

This task is often difficult for students. Many students can identify an opposing or alternative perspective, but they struggle to explain why the other perspective is incorrect or why another perspective might be equally as valid as their own argument. To help students master this skill, ask them to identify evidence that would support an alternative perspective when establishing their own claims. Then, have them explain why, in the face of this evidence, they still chose to support a different claim. This thought process shows students one way of effectively rebutting or refuting an alternative perspective. Key phrases such as “while some may argue” or “even though some evidence supports” can help them frame their counterarguments.

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Topic	Suggested Skills
5.1 Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior	1.D Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.
5.2 Voter Turnout	3.C Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.
5.3 Political Parties	1.B Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
5.4 How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt	4.B Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
5.5 Third-Party Politics	3.D Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.
5.6 Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking	3.F Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.
5.7 Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes	1.E Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.
5.8 Electing a President	5.A Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.
5.9 Congressional Elections	5.B Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.
5.10 Modern Campaigns	5.C Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.
5.11 Campaign Finance	2.B Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.
5.12 The Media	5.D Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation.
5.13 Changing Media	2.D Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a relevant political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.



Go to [AP Classroom](#) to assign the **Progress Check** for Unit 5. Review the results in class to identify and address any student misunderstandings.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The sample activities on this page are optional and are offered to provide possible ways to incorporate various instructional approaches into the classroom. Teachers do not need to use these activities or instructional approaches and are free to alter or edit them. The examples below were developed in partnership with teachers from the AP community to share ways that they approach teaching the content and skills in this unit. Please refer to the Instructional Approaches section beginning on p. 141 for more examples of activities and strategies.

Activity	Topic	Sample Activity
1	5.2	<p>Look for a Pattern</p> <p>Using a complex graph with at least two data sets—for example, showing voting patterns by age and gender—have students compare the data to find a trend and draw a conclusion. They should also explain their reasoning. For example, a graph may show that less than 40 percent of people under the age of 24 vote, but over 70 percent of people aged 65–74 vote. Students could conclude that candidates are unlikely to champion issues favored mostly by the young because young people are not as likely to vote as older people.</p>
2	5.7	<p>Debate</p> <p>Facilitate a debate about the various groups that influence policy in our government today. Ask students to take a position on which group they believe has the most influence and to provide relevant supporting evidence to back up their claims.</p>
3	5.13	<p>Self/Peer Revision</p> <p>Ask students to write an argument based on the following prompt: <i>Which of the following factions have the most impact on national elections today: political parties, special interest groups, or the media?</i> Ask students to use evidence from <i>Federalist No. 10</i> to support their claims. Have students perform self- and peer revisions of their practice argument essays so they have the opportunity to review their practice claims, supporting evidence, sourcing, and analysis and reasoning.</p>

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Concept Application

1.D

Describe political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors illustrated in different scenarios in context.

TOPIC 5.1

Voting Rights and Models of Voting Behavior

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.1.A

Describe the voting rights protections in the Constitution and in legislation.

LO 5.1.B

Describe different models of voting behavior.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.1.A.1

Expansion of opportunities for political participation are found in the legal protections of the Amendments to the Constitution.

- i. The 14th Amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the U.S., including formerly enslaved people.
- ii. The 15th Amendment granted African American men the right to vote.
- iii. The 17th Amendment changed the practice for electing Senators from a vote by state legislatures to a direct vote by the people.
- iv. The 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote.
- v. The 24th Amendment eliminated poll taxes, a structural barrier to voting.
- vi. The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18.

EK 5.1.B.1

Various political models explain differences in voting behavior.

- i. Rational choice voting refers to individuals who base their decisions on what is perceived to be in their best interest.
- ii. Retrospective voting refers to individuals who decide whether the party or candidate in power should be reelected based on the recent past.

continued on next page

LO 5.1.B

Describe different models of voting behavior.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- iii. Prospective voting refers to individuals who vote based on predictions of how a party or candidate will perform in the future.
- iv. Straight ticket voting refers to individuals who vote for all of the candidates from one political party on a ballot.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Data Analysis

3.C

Explain patterns and trends in data to draw conclusions.



OPTIONAL READINGS

- Rob Paral's "Stepping Up: The Impact of the Newest Immigrant, Asian, and Latino Voters," Immigration Policy Center (2013)
- "The Diversifying Electorate—Voting Rates by Race and Hispanic Origin in 2012 (and Other Recent Elections)," U.S. Census Bureau (May 2013)
- David RePass's "Issue Salience and Party Choice," *American Political Science Review* (1971)

AVAILABLE RESOURCE

- Classroom Resources > [Data Analysis \(Voter Turnout\)](#)

TOPIC 5.2

Voter Turnout

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.2.A

Explain the roles that individual choice and state laws play in voter turnout in elections.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.2.A.1

Structural barriers (such as polling hours, availability of absentee ballots, etc.), political efficacy (the belief that an individual's participation in the political process will make a difference), and demographics can influence differences in voter turnout in the U.S.

EK 5.2.A.2

The following can influence voter turnout:

- Differences in state-controlled elections (the hours polls are open, Voter ID laws, variations in funding for polling places and workers, variations in types of voting allowed, such as voting by mail, absentee voting, and early voting)
- Variations in voter registration laws and procedures (registering in-person, online, or automatically)
- Election type (more turnout for presidential elections than midterm elections)

EK 5.2.A.3

Demographic characteristics and political efficacy or engagement are used to predict the likelihood of whether an individual will vote.

EK 5.2.A.4

Factors influencing voter choice include:

- Party identification and ideological orientation
- Candidate characteristics
- Contemporary political issues
- Religious beliefs or affiliation, age, gender, race and ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics

TOPIC 5.3

Political Parties

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.B

Explain political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- 2012 Democratic and Republican party platforms

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.3.A

Describe linkage institutions.

LO 5.3.B

Explain the function and impact of political parties on the electorate and government

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.3.A.1

Linkage institutions are channels that allow individuals to communicate their preferences to policymakers:


- i. Political parties
- ii. Interest groups
- iii. Elections
- iv. Media

EK 5.3.B.1

The functions and impact of political parties on the electorate and government are represented by:

- i. Mobilization and education of voters
- ii. Party platforms
- iii. Candidate recruitment
- iv. Campaign management, including fundraising and media strategy
- v. The committee and party leadership systems in legislatures

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Source Analysis

4.B

Explain how the argument or perspective in the source relates to political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Mitt Romney's ORCA and Barack Obama's Project Narwhal in the 2012 campaign

TOPIC 5.4

How and Why Political Parties Change and Adapt

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.4.A

Explain why and how political parties change and adapt.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.4.A.1

Parties have adapted to candidate-centered campaigns where the public focus is on the characteristics of the candidate and not on the party. The role of parties in nominating candidates has also been weakened.

EK 5.4.A.2

Parties may adapt their policies and messaging to appeal to various demographic coalitions.

EK 5.4.A.3

The structure of parties has been influenced by:

- i. Critical elections (elections in which there is a realignment of political party support among voters)
- ii. Campaign finance law
- iii. Changes in communication and data management technology

EK 5.4.A.4

Parties use communication technology and voter data management to disseminate, control, and clarify political messages and enhance outreach and mobilization efforts.

TOPIC 5.5

Third-Party Politics

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Data Analysis*

3.D

Explain what the data implies or illustrates about political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors.

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.5.A

Explain how structural barriers affect third-party and independent candidate success.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.5.A.1

In comparison to proportional systems, winner-take-all voting districts serve as a structural barrier to third-party and independent candidate success. Winner-take-all voting advantages the two-party system in the U.S.

EK 5.5.A.2

The incorporation of third-party agendas into platforms of major political parties serves as a barrier to third-party and independent candidate success.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Data Analysis*

3.F

Explain possible limitations of the visual representation of the data provided.



OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Tobacco subsidies
- Tax cuts under George W. Bush
- Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (1965)
- E. E. Schattschneider's *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America* (1960)

TOPIC 5.6

Interest Groups Influencing Policymaking

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.6.A

Explain the benefits and potential problems of interest group influence on elections and policymaking.

LO 5.6.B

Explain how variation in types of interest groups and the resources interest groups possess affects their ability to influence elections and policymaking.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.6.A.1

Interest groups may represent very specific or more general interests, and can educate voters and office holders, conduct lobbying, draft legislation, and mobilize membership to apply pressure on and work with legislators and government agencies. Interest groups may also file an amicus curiae brief (a written document submitted as a “friend of the court” to provide additional information for justices to consider when reviewing a case).

EK 5.6.A.2

In addition to working within party coalitions, interest groups exert influence through iron triangles and issue networks that help interest groups exert influence across political party coalitions.

EK 5.6.B.1

The inequality of interest group resources affects the amount of influence they may have on the policymaking process.

- i. Some interest groups, such as AARP, have large memberships, are able to mobilize those members, and possess access to large financial reserves.
- ii. Some interest groups have more direct and more frequent access to important people in the policy process.

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LO 5.6.B

Explain how variation in types of interest groups and the resources interest groups possess affects their ability to influence elections and policymaking.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

- iii. Free riders are individuals who benefit from the work of an interest group without providing financial support. Interest groups may deal with this issue by providing selective benefits, goods and services that are only available to members, to encourage more people to join.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Concept Application*

1.E

Explain how political principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors apply to different scenarios in context.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE
(NOT REQUIRED)

- Club for Growth supporting limits on taxation

TOPIC 5.7

Groups Influencing Policy Outcomes

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 5.7.A**

Explain how various political actors influence public policy outcomes.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 5.7.A.1**

Single-issue groups, ideological/social movements, and protest movements form with the goal of affecting society and policymaking.

EK 5.7.A.2

Competing actors such as interest groups, professional organizations, social movements, the military, and bureaucratic agencies influence policymaking, such as the federal budget process, at key stages and to varying degrees.


EK 5.7.A.3

Elections and political parties are related to major policy shifts or initiatives, occasionally leading to political realignments of voting constituencies.

TOPIC 5.8

Electing a President

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Argumentation

5.A

Articulate a defensible claim/thesis.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE (NOT REQUIRED)

- 2000 presidential election

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Professional Development > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 5: Argumentation](#)

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.8.A

Explain how the different processes work in a U.S. presidential election.

LO 5.8.B

Explain how the Electoral College affects U.S. presidential elections.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.8.A.1


The process and outcomes in U.S. presidential elections are affected by:

- i. Incumbency advantage phenomenon (benefits current officeholders possess over challengers)
- ii. Open and closed primaries (voting processes to elect candidates)
- iii. Caucuses (closed meetings of party members to select candidates or decide policy)
- iv. Party conventions
- v. General (presidential) elections
- vi. The Electoral College

EK 5.8.B.1

States can choose how they allocate their electors; most states use a winner-take-all system. Because the results of the Electoral College vote may not be the same as the popular vote nationwide, there is an ongoing debate over the Electoral College.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 Argumentation

5.B

Support an argument or claim/thesis using relevant evidence.



AVAILABLE RESOURCES

- Professional Development > [Teaching and Assessing Module—Unit 5: Argumentation](#)

TOPIC 5.9

Congressional Elections

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE**LO 5.9.A**

Explain how the different processes work in U.S. congressional elections.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE**EK 5.9.A.1**


The process and outcomes in U.S. congressional elections are affected by:

- Incumbency advantage phenomenon
- Open and closed primaries
- Caucuses
- General (presidential and midterm) elections.

TOPIC 5.10

Modern Campaigns

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Argumentation*

5.C

Use reasoning to organize and analyze evidence, explaining its significance to justify an argument or claim/thesis.



OPTIONAL READINGS AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES (NOT REQUIRED)

- Canvassing and phone banking
- Sasha Issenberg's *Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* (2012)

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.10.A

Explain how campaign organizations and strategies affect the election process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.10.A.1

The benefits and drawbacks of modern campaigns are represented by:

- i. Dependence on professional consultants
- ii. Rising campaign costs and intensive fundraising efforts
- iii. Duration of election cycles
- iv. Impact of and reliance on social media for campaign communication and fundraising

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Application

2.B

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a foundational document or to other primary or secondary sources.

TOPIC 5.11

Campaign Finance

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.11.A

Explain how the organization, finance, and strategies of national political campaigns affect the election process.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.11.A.1

Federal legislation and case law pertaining to campaign finance demonstrate the ongoing debate over the role of money in political and free speech, as set forth in:

- i. The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002, which was an effort to ban soft money and reduce attack ads with “Stand by Your Ad” provision: “I’m [candidate’s name] and I approve this message”
- ii. Supreme Court decisions that ruled political spending by corporations, associations, and labor unions is a form of protected speech under the First Amendment

EK 5.11.A.2

Debates have increased over free speech and competitive and fair elections related to money and campaign funding (including contributions from individuals, political action committees [PACs], and political parties).


EK 5.11.A.3

Different types of PACs influence elections and policymaking through fundraising and spending.

TOPIC 5.12

The Media

SUGGESTED SKILL

 *Argumentation*

5.D

Respond to opposing or alternate perspectives with rebuttal or refutation.



OPTIONAL READINGS

- FiveThirtyEight.com blog by Nate Silver
- "Understanding the Participatory News Consumer," A Pew Trust Report (March 1, 2010)

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.12.A

Explain the media's role as a linkage institution.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.12.A.1

Agenda setting takes place when traditional news media, new communication technologies, and advances in social media influence how citizens routinely acquire political information, including news events, investigative journalism, election coverage, and political commentary.

EK 5.12.A.2

The media's use of polling results to convey popular levels of trust and confidence in government can affect elections by turning such events into "horse races" based more on popularity and factors other than qualifications and platforms of candidates.

SUGGESTED SKILL

 SCOTUS Analysis

2.D

Explain how a required Supreme Court case relates to a relevant political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior.



OPTIONAL READING

- Malcolm Gladwell's "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted," *The New Yorker* (Oct. 4, 2010)

TOPIC 5.13

Changing Media

Required Course Content

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

LO 5.13.A

Explain how increasingly diverse choices of media and communication outlets influence political institutions and behavior.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

EK 5.13.A.1

Political participation is influenced by a variety of media coverage, analysis, and commentary on political events.

EK 5.13.A.2

The rapidly increasing demand for media and political communications outlets from an ideologically diverse audience have led to debates over media bias and the impact of media ownership and partisan news sites.

EK 5.13.A.3

The nature of democratic debate and the level of political knowledge among citizens is affected by:

- Increased media choices
- Ideologically oriented programming
- Consumer-driven media outlets and emerging technologies that reinforce existing beliefs
- Uncertainty over the credibility of news sources and information