

# AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS



## About the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>)

The Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies — with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both — while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

## AP Government Program

The AP Program offers two government courses: AP United States (U.S.) Government and Politics and AP Comparative Government and Politics. Each course is designed to be equivalent to a one-semester introductory college course. There is no prescribed sequence of study. A school may offer one or both courses.

## AP United States Government and Politics Course Overview

AP United States Government and Politics introduces students to key political ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the political culture of the United States. The course examines politically significant concepts and themes, through which students learn to apply disciplinary reasoning assess causes and consequences of political events, and interpret data to develop evidence-based arguments.

### RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisite courses for AP United States Government and Politics. Students should be able to read a college level textbook and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.

## AP United States Government and Politics Course Content

Students study general concepts used to interpret U.S. government and politics and analyze specific topics, including:

- Constitutional Underpinnings;
- Political Beliefs and Behaviors;
- Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media;
- Institutions of National Government;
- Public Policy; and
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

An integral part of the course includes analysis and interpretation of basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics, and the development of connections and application of relevant theories and concepts.

## Course Goals and Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will:

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

## AP United States Government and Politics Exam Structure

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS EXAM:  
2 HOURS 25 MINUTES

### Assessment Overview

The AP United States Government and Politics Exam asks students to explain and apply key and supporting concepts. The exam measures students' understanding of American political culture and the interactions of governing and linkage institutions. Questions are based on the six major topics in the course, and students must be able to define, compare, explain, and interpret political concepts, policies, processes, perspectives, and behaviors that characterize the U.S. political system.

### Format of Assessment

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**Section I:** Multiple Choice | 60 Questions | 45 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

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- Demonstrate understanding of major course concepts, policies and institutions
- Apply skills of comparison and interpretation in addition to factual recall

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**Section II:** Free Response | 4 Questions | 100 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

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- Define concepts and explain or interpret content across all course topics
- Analyze political relationships and evaluate policy changes using examples from the course to support the argument or response

## AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

### Sample Multiple-Choice Question:

1. The Constitution and its amendments expressly prohibit all of the following except
  - (a) slavery
  - (b) double jeopardy
  - (c) cruel and unusual punishment
  - (d) unreasonable searches and seizures
  - (e) sex discrimination in employment

Correct Answer: E

### Sample Free-Response Question:

1. While interest groups and political parties each play a significant role in the United States political system, they differ in their fundamental goals.
  - (a) Identify the fundamental goal of interest groups in the political process.
  - (b) Identify the fundamental goal of major political parties in the political process.
  - (c) Describe two different ways by which interest groups support the fundamental goal of political parties in the political process.
  - (d) For one of the forms of support you described in (c), explain two different ways in which that form of support helps interest groups to achieve their fundamental goal in the political process.