

FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

👁️ EYES ON THE FIVES! 👁️

AP Government & Politics



A MESSAGE FROM YOUR TEACHER, MR.

CUTLER 

I have **COMPLETE FAITH** in each and every one of you! You are capable of achieving greatness on the AP exam, and this study guide is your roadmap to success.

Study hard, stay focused, and remember: You've got the knowledge, you've got the skills, and most importantly, **YOU'VE GOT THIS!**

Now it's your turn to carry that torch! 🔥



ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE



Multiple Choice

30 Questions

1 Class Period (Friday, Oct. 17)

Test your knowledge of foundational concepts



Free Response

2 FRQ Responses

1 Class Period (Monday, Oct. 20)

Demonstrate your analytical skills

YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS

- **Master the Documents:** Know your Declaration, Constitution, Federalist Papers, and Brutus No. 1
- **Understand the Cases:** Marbury v. Madison, McCulloch v. Maryland, and U.S. v. Lopez are your friends
- **Learn the Terms:** Every vocabulary word is a building block to your success
- **Connect the Concepts:** See how federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances work together
- **Practice, Practice, Practice:** Use this guide to quiz yourself and review daily

💡 REMEMBER 💡

"We the People" includes **YOU!**

You are studying the very foundations that built our democracy.

You are preparing to be informed citizens and leaders.

You are **READY** for this challenge!

🎯 EYES ON THE FIVES! 🎯

Let's make those AP scores **SHINE!**

AP Government Unit 1 Study Guide

Complete Reference for Foundational Documents, Supreme Court Cases, and Key Terms

Constitutional Amendment Process (Article V)

The Constitution can be amended through a two-step process:

Step 1: Proposal (National Level)

- **Method 1:** 2/3 of both the House and Senate vote to propose an amendment

- **Method 2:** 2/3 of state legislatures call a national convention to propose an amendment

Note: This step is proposal only, not final approval

Step 2: Ratification (State Level)

Congress chooses the ratification method:

- **Method 1:** 3/4 of state legislatures ratify
- **Method 2:** Conventions in 3/4 of the states ratify (used only for 21st Amendment)

Once 3/4 of states ratify by the chosen method, the amendment is adopted and the

Archivist certifies it. No additional congressional vote is needed.

Amendment Process Chart	Proposal	Ratification
Most Common Method	2/3 of both houses of Congress	3/4 of state legislatures
Alternative Methods	National convention called by 2/3 of states	Conventions in 3/4 of states
Usage	Used for all 27 amendments	Used only for 21st Amendment

Primary Source Documents

Declaration of Independence (1776)

- **Key Ideas:** Natural rights, consent of the governed, right to revolution
- **Philosophical Influence:** John Locke's Second Treatise - life, liberty, property
- **AP Connection:** Foundation of American political philosophy

Articles of Confederation (1781-1789)

- **Structure:** Weak central government, strong state sovereignty
- **Problems:** No taxation power, no executive, unanimous consent for amendments
- **AP Connection:** Shows why Constitution was necessary

U.S. Constitution (1787)

- **Key Principles:** Separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism
- **Structure:** Seven articles establishing government framework
- **AP Connection:** Foundation of all constitutional interpretation

Bill of Rights (1791)

- **Purpose:** Protect individual liberties from government overreach
- **Key Amendments:** 1st (speech, religion), 4th (search/seizure), 14th (due process)
- **AP Connection:** Basis for civil liberties cases

Federalist Papers

Federalist No. 10 (Madison)

- **Problem:** Factions threaten republican government
- **Solution:** Large republic with diverse interests
- **AP Connection:** Pluralist democracy theory

Federalist No. 51 (Madison)

- **Key Quote:** "Ambition must be made to counteract ambition"
- **Principle:** Separation of powers and checks and balances
- **AP Connection:** Constitutional structure rationale

Federalist No. 78 (Hamilton)

- **Topic:** Judicial branch as "least dangerous branch"

- **Key Idea:** Lifetime tenure ensures judicial independence
- **AP Connection:** Justification for judicial review

Brutus No. 1 (Anti-Federalist)

- **Argument:** Large republic will destroy liberty
- **Concerns:** Federal government too powerful, states will lose authority
- **AP Connection:** Counter-argument to Federalist No. 10

Philosophical Foundations

John Locke's Second Treatise of Government

- **State of Nature:** Generally peaceful, but lacks impartial judge
- **Natural Rights:** Life, liberty, property
- **Social Contract:** Government by consent to protect rights

Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan

- **State of Nature:** "War of all against all" - brutal and chaotic
- **Social Contract:** Absolute sovereign needed for order
- **Contrast with Locke:** More pessimistic view of human nature

Required Supreme Court Cases

Marbury v. Madison (1803) – AP REQUIRED

- **Facts:** Marbury appointed justice of peace; Madison refused to deliver commission
- **Issue:** Can Supreme Court order executive officials to act?
- **Holding:** Court lacks jurisdiction, but establishes judicial review
- **Significance:** Supreme Court can declare laws unconstitutional
- **AP Impact:** Foundation of judicial power in constitutional system

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819) – AP REQUIRED

- **Facts:** Maryland taxed national bank; bank refused to pay
- **Issues:** (1) Can Congress create a bank? (2) Can states tax federal institutions?
- **Holdings:** (1) Yes - Necessary and Proper Clause (2) No - Supremacy Clause
- **Significance:** Broad interpretation of implied powers
- **AP Impact:** Expansion of federal authority over states

U.S. v. Lopez (1995) – AP REQUIRED

- **Facts:** Student brought gun to school; charged under federal Gun-Free School Zones Act
- **Issue:** Does Commerce Clause allow federal regulation of guns in schools?
- **Holding:** No - gun possession in schools not economic activity affecting interstate commerce
- **Significance:** First time since 1930s Court limited Commerce Clause power
- **AP Impact:** Revival of federalism and limits on federal power

Required Terms to Know

Democratic Ideals and Foundations

Term	Definition	AP Significance
Natural Rights	Rights inherent to all humans (life, liberty, property)	Basis for limiting government power
Popular Sovereignty	Government authority comes from the people	Foundation of democratic legitimacy
Limited Government	Government power is restricted by law	Prevents tyranny through constitutional constraints
Republicanism	Government through elected representatives	Alternative to direct democracy

Social Contract Theory	People consent to government in exchange for protection	Justifies government authority
State of Nature	Hypothetical condition before government	Explains why government is necessary
Consent of the Governed	Government legitimacy requires popular approval	Right to revolution if consent withdrawn
Inalienable Rights	Rights that cannot be surrendered or taken away	Limits on majority rule

Government Structure and Principles

Term	Definition	AP Significance
Separation of Powers	Division of government into three branches	Prevents concentration of power
Checks and Balances	Each branch can limit the others	Ensures no branch becomes dominant
Federalism	Power divided between national and state governments	Key feature of American system
Bicameralism	Legislature divided into two chambers	Balances large and small state interests
Enumerated Powers	Powers explicitly listed in Constitution for federal government	Foundation of federal authority
Implied Powers	Powers reasonably inferred from enumerated powers	Allows constitutional flexibility
Reserved Powers	Powers belonging to states (10th Amendment)	Basis for state sovereignty
Concurrent Powers	Powers shared by federal and state governments	Can create federal-state tensions
Supremacy Clause	Federal law supreme over conflicting state laws	Resolves federal-state conflicts

Necessary and Proper Clause	Congress can make laws needed to execute enumerated powers	Source of implied powers
Commerce Clause	Congress can regulate interstate and foreign commerce	Primary vehicle for federal power expansion

Constitutional Framework

Term	Definition	AP Significance
Articles of Confederation	First U.S. constitution (1781-1789)	Shows need for stronger federal government
Constitutional Convention	1787 meeting that created the Constitution	Compromise between competing interests
Great Compromise	House based on population, Senate equal representation	Resolved large vs. small state conflict
Three-Fifths Compromise	Enslaved people counted as 3/5 for representation	Balanced Northern and Southern interests
Electoral College	Indirect election of president through electors	Compromise between popular and legislative selection
Ratification	Process of formally approving the Constitution	Required 9 of 13 states
Amendment Process	Formal method to change Constitution	Allows adaptation while ensuring stability
Bill of Rights	First 10 amendments protecting individual liberties	Anti-Federalist demand for ratification
Due Process	Government must follow fair procedures	5th and 14th Amendment protection
Equal Protection	Government must treat people equally under law	14th Amendment guarantee

Political Theory and Debate

Term	Definition	AP Significance
Federalists	Supported strong national government and Constitution	Hamilton, Madison, Washington
Anti-Federalists	Opposed Constitution, feared strong central government	Demanded Bill of Rights
Factions	Groups united by common interest adverse to community	Madison's concern in Federalist 10
Large Republic Theory	Large, diverse republic prevents faction dominance	Madison's solution to faction problem
Small Republic Theory	Small republics better preserve liberty and representation	Anti-Federalist argument
Participatory Democracy	Broad citizen involvement in political process	Ideal of maximum democratic participation
Pluralist Democracy	Competing groups influence policy	Reflects Madison's large republic theory
Elite Democracy	Small group of leaders makes key decisions	Concern about democratic reality
Representative Democracy	Citizens elect representatives to make decisions	American system of government
Direct Democracy	Citizens vote directly on policy issues	Impractical for large nations

Legal and Constitutional Concepts

Term	Definition	AP Significance
Judicial Review	Courts can declare laws unconstitutional	Established in Marbury v. Madison

Constitutional Interpretation	How courts determine Constitution's meaning	Central to judicial power
Strict Construction	Constitution should be interpreted literally	Limits government power expansion
Loose Construction	Constitution should be interpreted broadly	Allows government adaptation
Precedent	Past court decisions guide future rulings	Basis of common law system
Original Intent	Constitution means what framers intended	Conservative judicial philosophy
Living Constitution	Constitution adapts to changing times	Liberal judicial philosophy
Incorporation	Bill of Rights applies to state governments	Expansion of civil liberties protection
Civil Liberties	Individual freedoms protected from government	Bill of Rights protections
Civil Rights	Equal treatment and protection under law	14th Amendment and legislation

Federalism Review

What is Federalism?

Federalism: A system that divides power between the national and state governments.

The Constitution was written as a compromise between Federalists (who wanted strong central government) and Anti-Federalists (who feared tyranny and wanted decentralized government).

Types of Powers in the Constitution

Power Type	Definition	Example	Source
Delegated Powers	Powers the states delegated to the federal government	Coining money, declaring war	Article 1, Section 8
Reserved Powers	Powers the states reserved for themselves	Education, marriage laws	10th Amendment
Concurrent Powers	Powers both state and federal government can exercise	Taxation, law enforcement	Constitution & 10th Amendment

Types of Delegated Powers

- **Expressed (Enumerated) Powers:** Powers found directly in the Constitution (e.g., declaring war)
- **Implied Powers:** Powers not directly stated but implied from expressed powers (e.g., military draft from power to maintain army)
- **Inherent Powers:** Powers belonging to the national government because it represents a sovereign state (e.g., immigration regulation)

Evolution of Federalism

Dual Federalism (1789-1937)

- **Characteristics:** State and national governments operate separately
- **Nickname:** "Layer Cake Federalism" - clear divisions with little interference
- **National Power:** Seen as limited

Cooperative Federalism (1937-present)

- **Catalyst:** Great Depression and New Deal programs
- **Characteristics:** Mixed state and national responsibilities
- **Nickname:** "Marble Cake Federalism" - intermingled powers
- **Federal Role:** More widely interpreted powers

Fiscal Federalism

Definition: The federal government's use of grants-in-aid to influence state policies

Types of Grants

Grant Type	Description	Federal Control	Example
Categorical Grants	Funds with specific provisions and federal regulations	High	SNAP (food assistance)
Block Grants	Funds with general guidelines, more state flexibility	Low	Community development
Mandates	Commands requiring states to follow rules to receive funding	High	Clean Water Act, ADA

Subcategories of Grants

- **Formula Grants:** Distributed according to specific formulas
- **Project Grants:** Awarded for specific projects or deliverables
- **Mandatory Grants:** Funding levels set by law, flow automatically
- **Discretionary Grants:** Must be appropriated annually by Congress

Constitutional Clauses and Federalism

Necessary and Proper Clause (Article 1, Section 8)

- **Purpose:** Allows Congress to make laws needed to execute enumerated powers
- **Nickname:** "Elastic Clause" - expands federal power
- **Example:** Creating zip codes to improve postal service

Supremacy Clause (Article VI, Clause 2)

- **Purpose:** Federal law is supreme over conflicting state laws

- **Function:** Conflict-of-laws rule prioritizing federal acts
- **Example:** Worcester v. Georgia - federal treaties override state law

Commerce Clause (Article 1, Section 8)

- **Purpose:** Congress can regulate interstate and foreign commerce
- **Evolution:** Expanded from trade to "any productive activity"
- **Key Cases:** Gibbons v. Ogden (waterways), Wickard v. Filburn (wheat), Katzenbach v. McClung (restaurants)

10th Amendment

- **Purpose:** Creates reserved powers for states
- **Principle:** Powers not given to federal government belong to states or people
- **Impact:** Basis for state sovereignty arguments

Advantages and Consequences of Federalism

Advantages	Consequences
Unity without uniformity	Variations in state laws
Encourages experimentation	Complex legal system
Keeps government closer to people	Each state has own constitution
Multiple access points for participation	Complex election system
Well-suited for large, diverse country	Services vary greatly state to state

Federalism in Action

- **Decentralizes Politics:** Citizens can participate at local, state, and national levels
- **Decentralizes Policies:** Different levels handle different problems
- **Encourages Innovation:** States can solve problems in different ways ("laboratories of democracy")

Modern Federalism Examples

- **Drinking Age:** Federal government threatened to withhold highway funding from states that didn't raise drinking age to 21
- **Environmental Standards:** States like California set stricter emissions standards than federal requirements
- **Criminal Justice:** States experiment with different approaches to prison overcrowding

Key Connections for AP Exam

Document Relationships

- Locke → Declaration: Natural rights philosophy
- Articles → Constitution: Weakness leads to strength
- Federalist 10 vs. Brutus 1: Large vs. small republic debate
- Federalist 51 → Constitution: Separation of powers rationale

Case Connections

- Marbury → McCulloch → Lopez: Evolution of federal power
- Federalist 78 → Marbury: Judicial review justification
- McCulloch → Lopez: Expansion then limitation of federal authority

Common FRQ Topics

- Federalism and balance of power
- Constitutional principles in action
- Founding debates and their modern relevance
- Supreme Court's role in constitutional interpretation
- Evolution of civil liberties and civil rights
- Democratic theory in practice