

United States Government

Grades 11-12

1 Semester

Prerequisite

Overview: Students will have an opportunity to participate in an in-depth study of the American political system: its framework, structures, traditions, values, and the rights and responsibilities of the citizens of the United States. The course emphasizes historical thinking skills within the context of government. Exposure and participation to real life experiences is a major focus in this course. Identification of issues crucial to the maintenance of democratic institutions is emphasized with a view toward resolution.

Units of Study	Big Ideas	Key Concepts	Essential Questions	Suggested Resources
Foundations of Democracy	Examine the kind of government	Origins of our democratic foundations, principles and rights	What is government?	
Political Process, Voting, and Media	Examine the foundations of U.S. Political Culture, how beliefs are formed, evolve, and transmitted, including the role of political parties and the media.	The formation of political ideology and the role of parties, media and interest groups in influencing citizen participation.	What is the U.S. political process? What is political efficacy and how is it formed?	
Legislative Branch and Process	Examine the organization, functions, and powers, of the U.S. Legislature, within the context of checks and balances and the creation of public policy.	Analyze how the U.S. Congress serves as the voice of the public through the law-making process and the system of checks and balances.	What is the U.S. Legislative branch of government? What does the U.S. Congress do and how does it do it? What purpose does the U.S. Congress serve for me?	
Executive Branch	Examine the organization,	Analyze the various roles the	What is the U.S. Executive	

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and Bureaucracy	functions and powers, of the U.S. Executive, within the context of checks and balances, and the execution of public policy and laws.	U.S. President plays and how the Executive Branch establishes economic, social, and political agendas/policies.	Branch? What does the U.S. Executive branch do and how does it do it? What does the U.S. Executive branch do and how does it do it?	
Judicial Branch, Law, and Supreme Court Decisions	Examine the organization, functions, and powers, of the U.S. Judiciary, within the context of checks and balances, and the review and creation of public policy and laws.	Examine the organization, functions, and powers, of the U.S. Judiciary, within the context of checks and balances, and the review and creation of public policy and laws.	What does the U.S. Judicial Branch do and how does it do it? What does the U.S. Judicial Branch do and how does it do it? What purpose does the U.S. Supreme Court serve for me?	
Civil Rights and Liberties	Examine the constitutional basis of individual rights, through an understanding of the social, political, and legal evolution of the U.S., and the expansion and contraction of individual liberties through the lens of Supreme Court decisions	Analyze Constitutional guarantees of individual rights, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions influencing individual liberties, within the context of public policies and social movements.	What are U.S. Civil Rights? What are U.S. Civil Rights? How can I exercise my civil rights and liberties as a U.S. citizen?	
State and Local Government (optional as a separate unit)	Examine the relationship, structure, and powers of State and various local governments, within the context of Federalism, and	Analyze the structure of State and local governments and the exercise of public policy at the local level.	What is my State government and what does it do? What is my local government and what does it do?	

Units of Study	Big Ideas	Key Concepts	Essential Questions	Suggested Resources
	state and local public policy, and laws.		How do I influence and participate in my local and state government?	

Priority Social Studies Standards

G/C.A. A student should know and understand how societies define authority, rights, and responsibilities through a governmental process.

1. Understand the necessity and purpose of government.
2. Understand the meaning of fundamental ideas, including equality, authority, power, freedom, justice, privacy, property, responsibility, and sovereignty

G/C.B A student should understand the constitutional foundation of the American political system and the democratic ideals of this nation.

3. Understand the United States Constitution, including separation of powers, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, majority rule, and minority rights
4. Know how power is shared in the United States’ constitutional government at the federal, state, and local levels

G/C.C A student should understand the character of government of the state.

1. Understand the various forms of the state’s local governments and the agencies and commissions that influence students’ lives and property
6. Understand the importance of the multicultural nature of the state

G/C.D A student should understand the role of the United States in international affairs

1. Analyze how domestic politics, the principles of the United States Constitution, foreign policy, and economics affect relations with other countries.
5. Analyze the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to current international issues

G/C.E A student should have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively as an informed and responsible citizen.

3. Exercise political participation by discussing public issues, building consensus, becoming involved in political parties and political campaigns, and voting
7. Implement ways of solving problems and resolving conflict.

G/C.F A student should understand the economies of the United States and the state and their relationships to the global economy

1. Understand how the government and the economy interrelate through regulations, incentives, and taxation
5. Understand the basic concepts of supply and demand, the market system, and profit

G/C.G A student should understand the impact of economic choices and participate effectively in the local, state, national, and global economies.

1. Apply economic principles to actual world situations
3. Identify and compare the costs and benefits when making choices.

CS.A Culturally knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community

7. Determine the place of their cultural community in the regional, state, national, and international political and economic systems

CS.E Culturally knowledgeable students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them

7. Determine how cultural values and beliefs influence the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds

LIL.B A student should understand and use research processes necessary to locate, evaluate, and communicate information and ideas

4. Evaluate the validity, relevancy, currency, and accuracy of information

LIL.D A student should be aware of the freedom to seek information and possess the confidence to pursue information needs beyond immediately

1. Available sources know how to access information through local, national, and international sources in printed and electronic formats

LIL.E A student should understand ethical, legal, and social behavior with respect to information resource

3. Understand and respect intellectual property rights and copyright laws

Priority Reading Standards

R.KI.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

R.CS.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts

R.IK.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

R.RR.11-12.10 By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11-12 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

- a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- c. Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic; convey a knowledgeable stance in a style that responds to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

W.11-12.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Vocabulary:

(Government) Social contract, Divine right, Magna Carta, Federalism, Checks and Balances, Separation of Powers, Popular Sovereignty, Judicial Review, Limited, Government, Constitutionalism, Republic, Democracy, Amendment, Confederation, Ratification, Bill of rights, Anarchy

(Political) Democratic party, Republican party third-party, Split ticket incumbent, Winner-takes-all lobbyists, Interest groups, Constituents, District, Primary, Elections, General elections, Gerrymandering, Referendum, Political actions, Committees (PACS), Partisan politics, Election process, Foreign Policy

(Legislative Branch) Committee, Majority/Minority, Leaders, Necessary and proper, Clause, Commerce, Appropriations, Ways and means, Oversight, Partisan (bipartisan), Override, Veto, Impeachment

(Executive Branch) Cabinet, Executive, Electoral college, Regulatory agencies, Treaty, Pocket veto, Executive powers, Presidential, Succession, Pardon, Commutation, Amnesty, Veto, Foreign, Domestic

(Judicial Branch) Majority opinion, Dissent opinion, Precedence jurisdiction, Appeal (appellate) civil criminal, Grand jury, Petit jury, Due process, Judicial Review, Law making process, Natural Law

(Civil Rights/Liberties) Civil rights, Civil liberties, Due process equal protection, Minority Rights, Inalienable Rights, Divine Right

(ELA) Primary source, Secondary source, Compare/contrast, Cause/effect, Central idea, Bias/Point of view, Thesis/claim, Formal voice, Supporting fact, Plagiarism, Citation, Reliable source

