

Summer Assignment - The US Constitution

*In order to be successful as an AP US Government & Politics student, it is important that you have a solid understanding of the U.S. Constitution. This document is fundamental to our curriculum, and we will reference it throughout the course. You will be turning this assignment in and tested over this assignment within the first two weeks of the class. You do NOT need a textbook to complete this assignment. Use the attached PDF of the Constitution, or visit <https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution>, to complete this assignment. Read every word of the document from the Preamble through the 27th Amendment. **THIS MUST BE COMPLETED BY HAND - TYPED ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** You don't need to write in complete sentences; think of this as your own study guide, so give answers that are helpful for your learning, understanding, and memorizing.*

Part I: STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. THE PREAMBLE: This paragraph, which begins with “We the People...”, outlines the basic tasks we ask our federal government to perform. List each one as it’s written in the document, then in the blank next to it, think of something the federal (national) government actually does to carry out this task.
- Task

Applicable Action

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

2. Read each of the 7 articles of the Constitution. Summarize the general purpose or subject of each article in one to two sentences in the chart below.

ARTICLE

I	
II	
III	

IV	
V	
VI	
VII	

3. Compare Articles I, II, and III. What are the primary differences?

4.

Constitutional eligibility requirements of elected offices (also known as formal requirements), found in Articles I and II		
member of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES	member of the SENATE	the PRESIDENT

5. The powers that are specifically granted (written, enumerated) to the branches of government by the Constitution are called **expressed or enumerated powers**.

a. Identify two *expressed powers* of the president.

b. What are the *expressed powers* of the vice president?

- c. Identify two *expressed powers* of Congress.
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- 6. According to the **Constitutional principle of checks and balances**, each branch of the government must have control over the other branches. Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one of each type of checks and balances. Some of these may be a repeat from the previous question.
 - a. A power that the executive branch has over the legislative branch.
 - b. A power that the executive branch has over the judicial branch.
 - c. A power that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch.
 - d. A power that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch.
 - e. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch.
 - f. A power that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch.
 - 7. Which branch of government has the power to declare war?
 - 8. What power does the Constitution give the President in the area of war?

Part II: IMPORTANT CLAUSES

- 1. Where (Article and Section) is the “**Commerce Clause**” and what does it mean (in your own words)?

2. Where is the “**Necessary and Proper Clause**” and what does it mean (in your own words)??
3. Where is the “**Supremacy Clause**” and what does it mean (in your own words)?
4. What does the “**due process**” clause of the 14th amendment mean?
5. What does the “**equal protection**” clause of the 14th amendment mean?

Part III: CHECKS AND BALANCES, FUNCTIONS OF BRANCHES

1. Veto
 - a. What bodies have the power to override a presidential veto?
 - b. What voting margin is required to override a presidential veto?
2. Treaties
 - a. What body has the power to ratify treaties?
 - b. What voting margin is required to ratify treaties?
3. To Impeach means ‘to bring charges against’ or ‘to indict’.
 - a. What body has the power to impeach the president?
 - b. What vote is required to impeach?
 - c. What is the standard for impeachment?

4. Electoral College
 - a. If no candidate for the presidency wins a simple majority of the total number of electoral votes, what body of government has the power to choose the president?
 - b. What margin is required to choose the president?
5. Article III: The Constitution has comparatively little to say about the structure and composition of the Supreme Court. Identify two aspects of the Court's structure and composition that the Constitution does not specify. (The Constitution does specify these two basic aspects of structure and composition for the other two branches.)
6. Article V: What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be *proposed*?
7. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be *ratified*?

Part IV. THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Some parts of the Constitution require a simple majority, others a supermajority, while still others protect citizens from the will of the majority. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights protects citizens from the will of the majority. In other words, no majority could vote to take these rights away. Read each amendment to the Constitution and answer the questions below. You will be expected to memorize and know all 27 amendments to the Constitution.

Amendment	The general purpose of the Amendment, what rights or liberties does it ensure?
1	

2	
3	
4	
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