

Summer Assignment - The US Constitution

*In order to be successful in AP US Government & Politics, it is important that you have a solid understanding of the principles, structure and contents of the U.S. Constitution. It 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 understanding, and memorization*

Constitutional Principles: Use a google search to find the definition and an example of each Constitutional Principle:

Principle	Definition	Example
Popular Sovereignty		
Federalism		
Separation of Powers		
Checks and Balances		
Limited Government		
Republicanism		
Individual Rights		

STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION

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. _____

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.

I	
II	
III	
IV	
V	
VI	
VII	

The BRANCHES of Government

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

1. What determines the number of members of the US House of Representatives per state?
2. What determined the number of US Senators from each state?
3. 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 five *expressed powers* of Congress found in Article 1, Section 8.
4. According to the **Constitutional principle of checks and balances**, each branch of the government must have the ability to 'check' ie. control some actions of the other two branches. Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one of each type of checks and balances:
 - a. A check that the executive branch has over the legislative branch.

 - b. A check that the executive branch has over the judicial branch.

 - c. A check that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch.

 - d. A check that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch.

- e. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch.
- f. A check that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch.

- 5. Which branch of government has the power to declare war?
- 6. What power does the Constitution give the President in the area of war?

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?

CHECKS AND BALANCES and Functions of the Branches

- 1. Veto
 - a. What governing body has the power to override a presidential veto?
 - b. What voting margin is required to override a presidential veto?

2. Treaties

- a. What governing body (be specific) has the power to ratify treaties with foreign nations?

- b. What voting margin is required to ratify treaties?

3. To Impeach means 'to bring charges against' or 'to indict'. This is NOT a removal from office, but an official step to bring charges against a president or judge to convict or acquit them of those impeachment charges.

- a. What body has the power to impeach the president (be specific)?

- b. What vote is required to impeach?

- c. What body has the power to hold an impeachment trial to decide whether an official will be removed from office (be specific)?

4. The Electoral College:

- a. Who cannot be an elector?

- b. What determines the number of electoral votes each state has?

- c. 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?

- d. What margin is required to choose the president?

5. Article III:

- a. Which branch establishes the Courts?

- b. How long can federal judges serve?

6. Article V:

- a. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be *proposed*?

- b. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be *ratified*?

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Amendments are changes made to the Constitution since its original ratification in 1788. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the **Bill of Rights**, protects citizens from the government and the tyranny 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. Only amendments that are significant to our learning are listed below. **You should have the Bill of Rights memorized.**

#	Year Ratified	The general purpose of the Amendment, what rights or liberties does it ensure?
1		
2		
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